IS Volume8

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8

インフィニット・ストラトス

INFINITE STRATOS

弓弦イズル
YUMIZURU Izuru

Illustration: CHOCO

OVERLAP

ゆ-01-08

IS〈インフィニット・ストラトス〉⑧

弓弦イズル

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OVERLAP

IS〈インフィニット・ストラトス〉⑧

「だっ……大好き……!」
対IS用IS『ゴーレムⅢ』による襲撃事件後に一夏へ告白した簪。
簪たち女子は告白に対する一夏の反応が気になって仕方がない。
一方、事件のダメージがまだ癒えぬIS学園では、それぞれの専用機がメンテナンスを余儀なくされ、一夏は『白式』と共にその開発元である倉持技研に向かう…。再び学園に忍び寄る黒い陰謀。黒鍵とは？ワールド・パージとは?
そしてヒロインたちの一夏への想いはいよいよ高まっていく!
新たなステージを疾走するハイスピード学園バトルラブコメ、待望の第8弾、満を持して登場!

IS
インフィニット・ストラトス
INFINITE STRATOS
2
Ichika ORIMURA
Tatenashi SARASHIKI
Houki SHINONONO
ON AIR at TBS

IS INFINITE STRATOS 8

インフィニット・ストラトス8

弓弦イズル

YUMIZURU Izuru

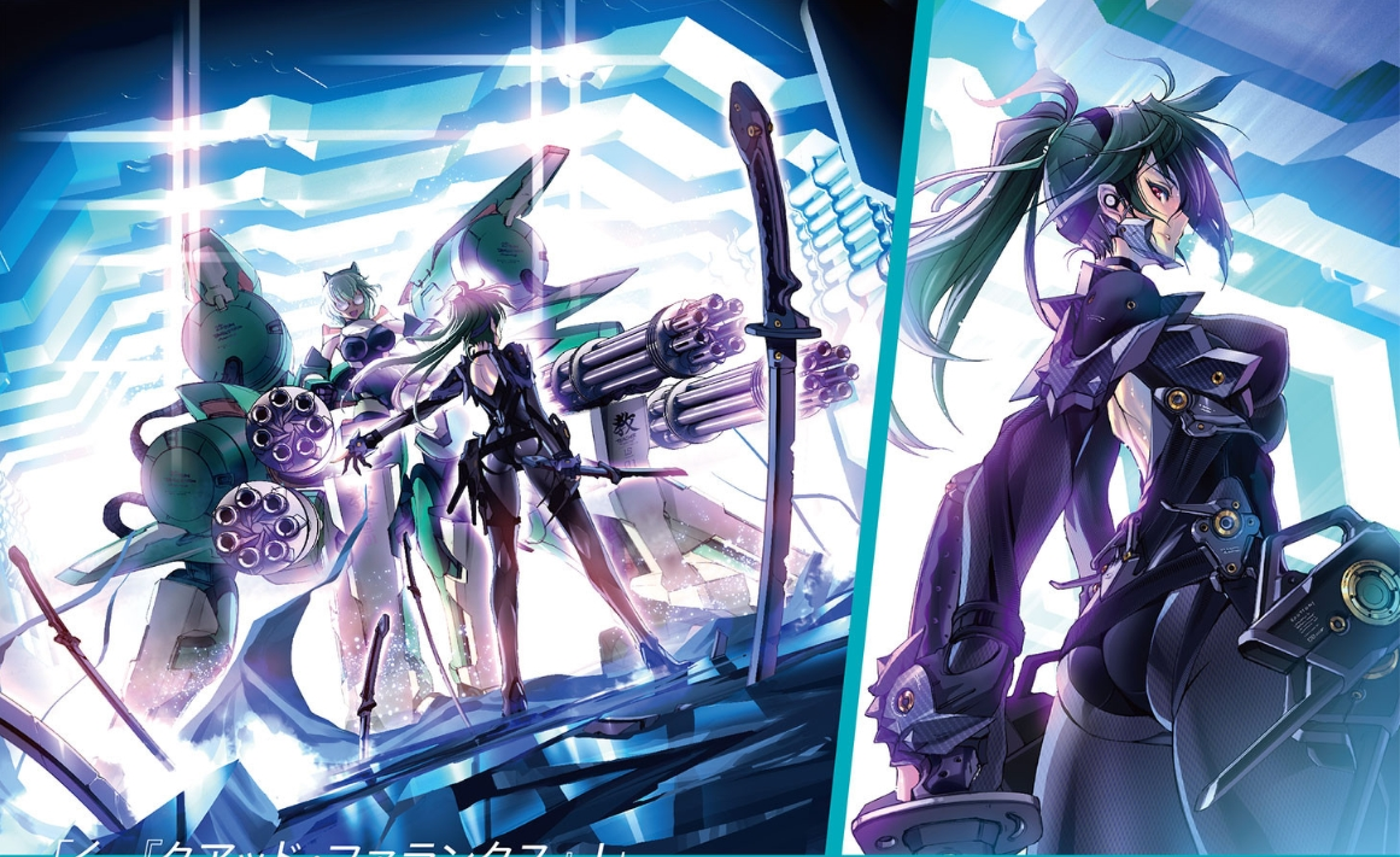
Illustration: CHOCO

ラウラ
「こっ、これでいいのかっ……!?」

鈴「きょ、今日こそは、いいよね……？」

シャル「い、一夏、もっと……見たい？」

セシリア「は、恥ずかしいですけれど……やっぱり気持ちいい……」



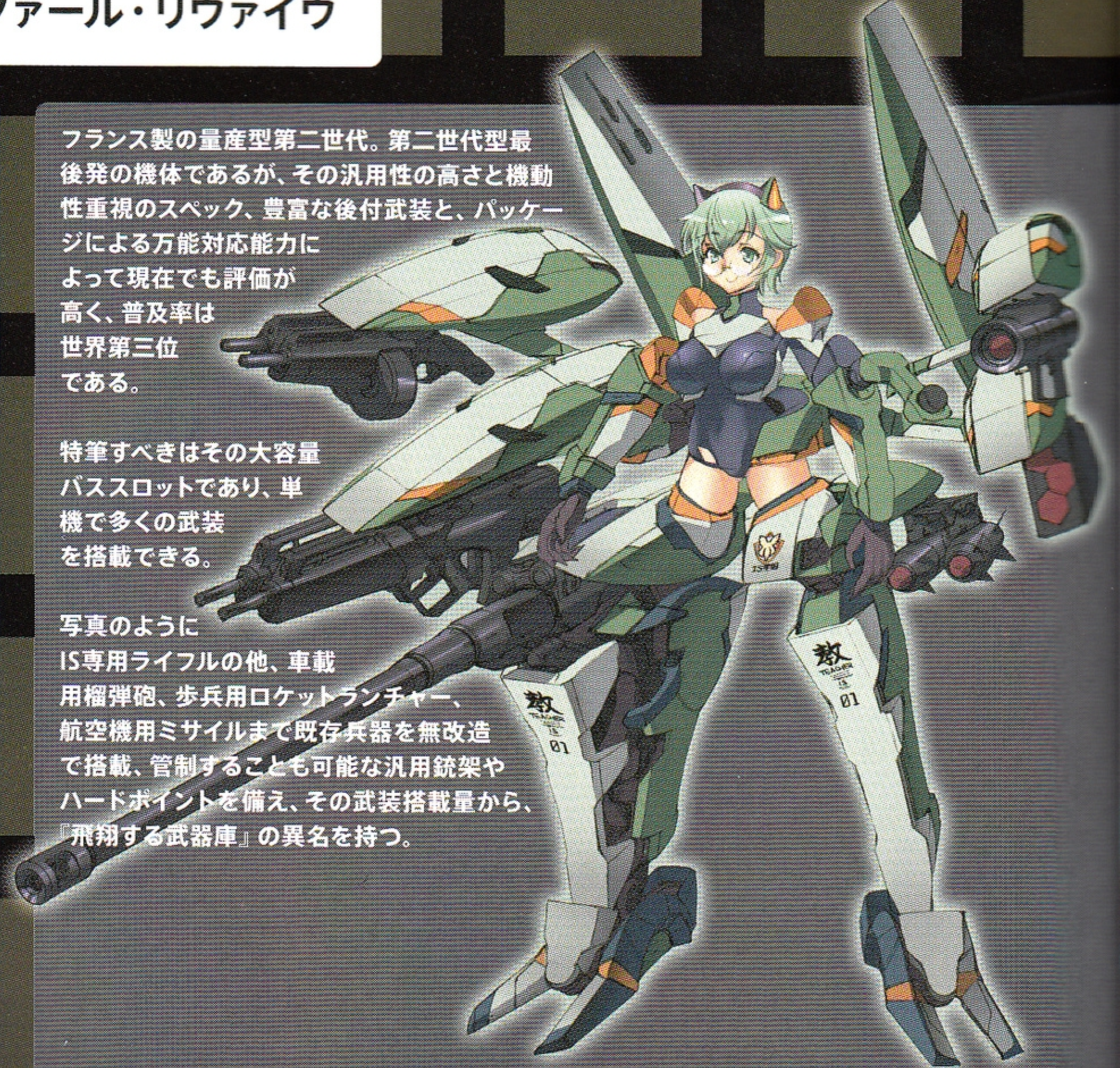
「く、『クアッド・ファランクス』！」

重量と反動制御故に一歩も動けない代わりに
最強の攻撃力を手にした『砲台』がそこに鎮座していた。

Infinite Stratos 8: Visualization of Stories

ラファール・リヴァイヴ

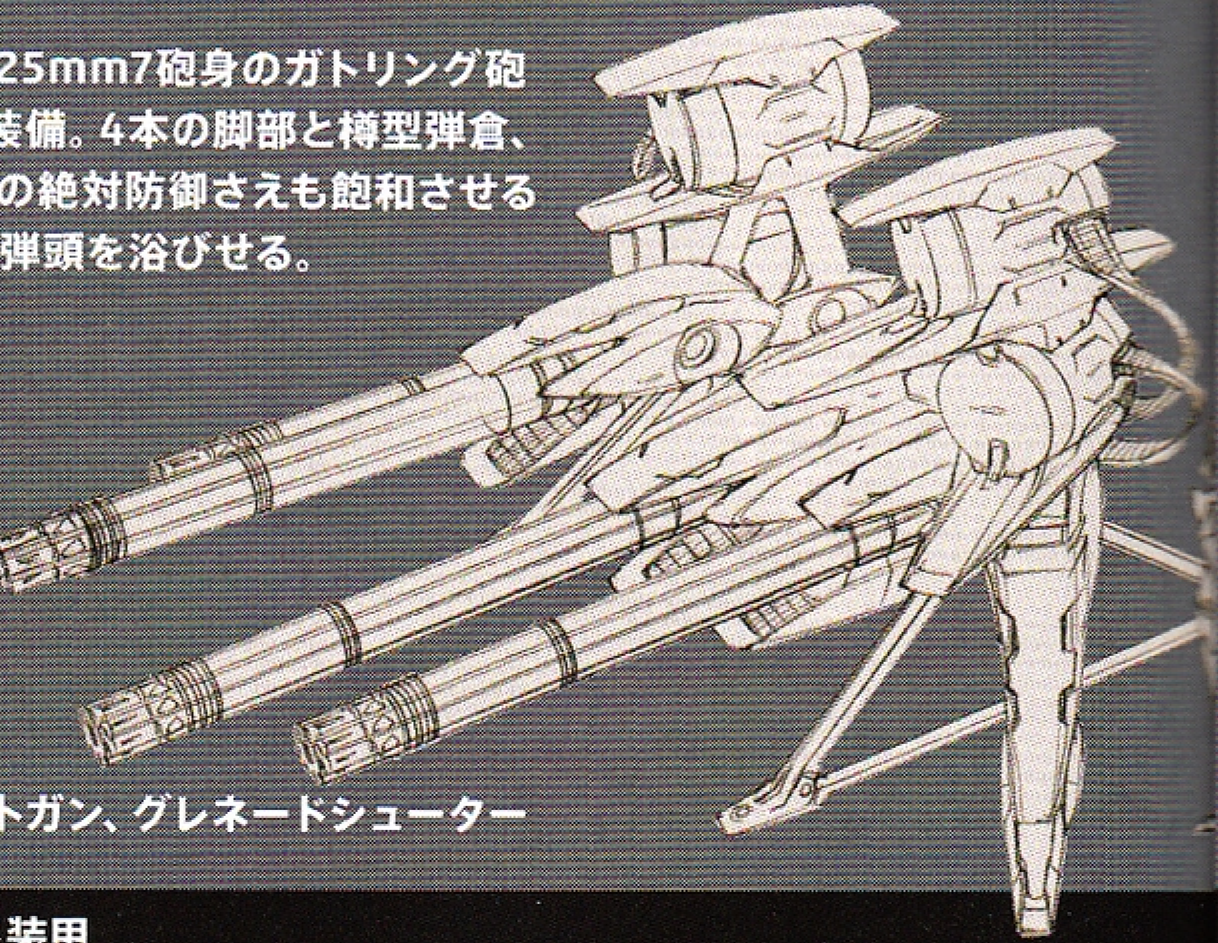
RAFALE REVIVE



フランス製の量産型第二世代。第二世代型最後発の機体であるが、その汎用性の高さと機動性重視のスペック、豊富な後付武装と、パッケージによる万能対応能力によって現在でも評価が高く、普及率は世界第三位である。

特筆すべきはその大容量バススロットであり、単機で多くの武装を搭載できる。

写真のようにIS専用ライフルの他、車載用榴弾砲、歩兵用ロケットランチャー、航空機用ミサイルまで既存兵器を無改造で搭載、管制することも可能な汎用銃架やハードポイントを備え、その武装搭載量から、『飛翔する武器庫』の異名を持つ。



クアッドガトリングパッケージ：

通常兵器である口径25mm7砲身のガトリング砲を4門搭載した追加装備。4本の脚部と樽型弾倉、管制装置を追加しISの絶対防御さえも飽和させる事が可能なの大量の弾頭を浴びせる。

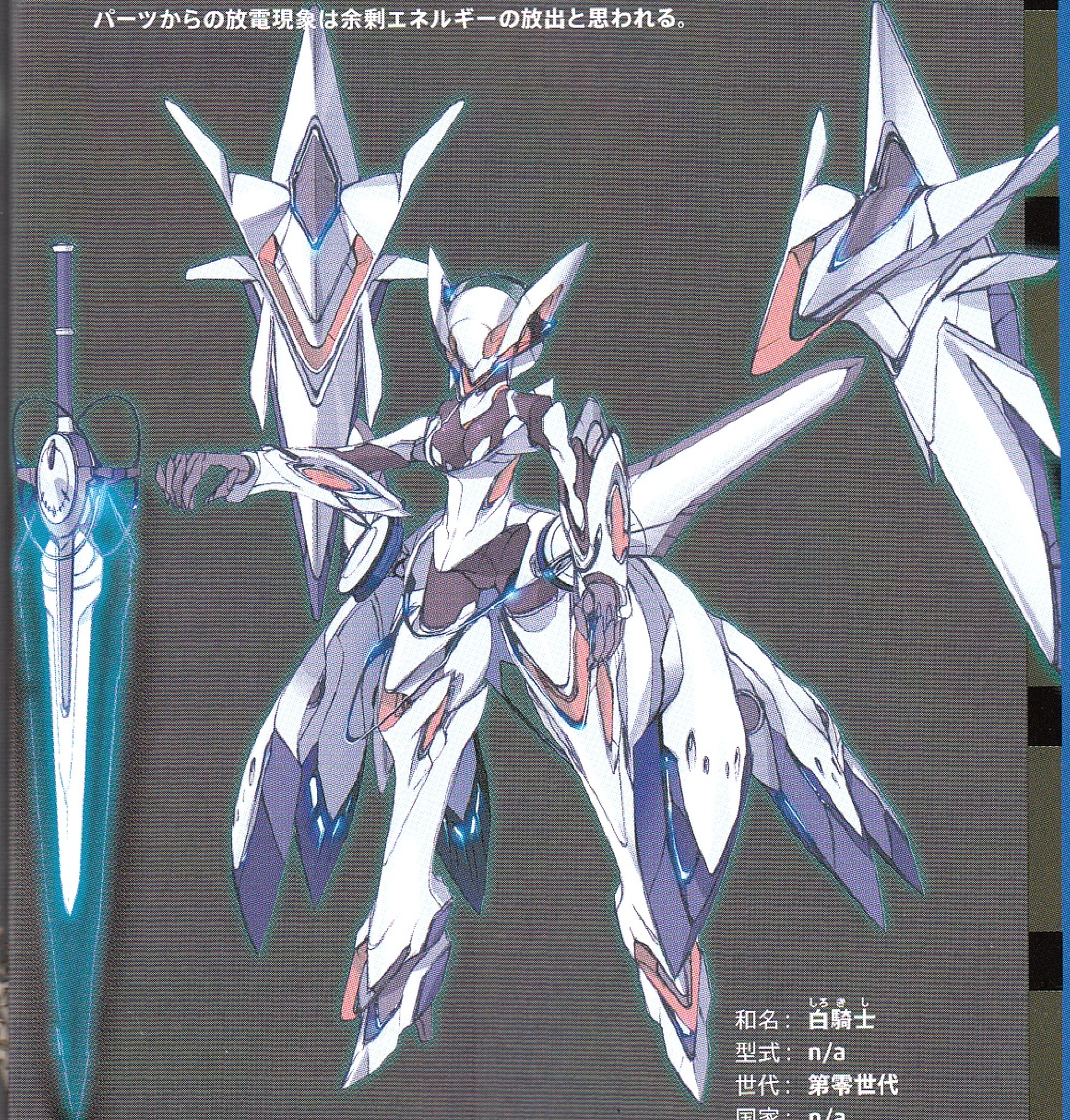
和名：疾風
型式：RR-08
世代：第二世代
国家：フランス
分類：全距離対応射撃型
装備：物理シールドx2
　　　アサルトライフル、
　　　スナイパーライフル、ショットガン、グレネードシューター
　　　マルチスラスター
装甲：衝撃吸収性サード・グリッド装甲
仕様：大容量バススロット、マルチウェポンラック

白騎士

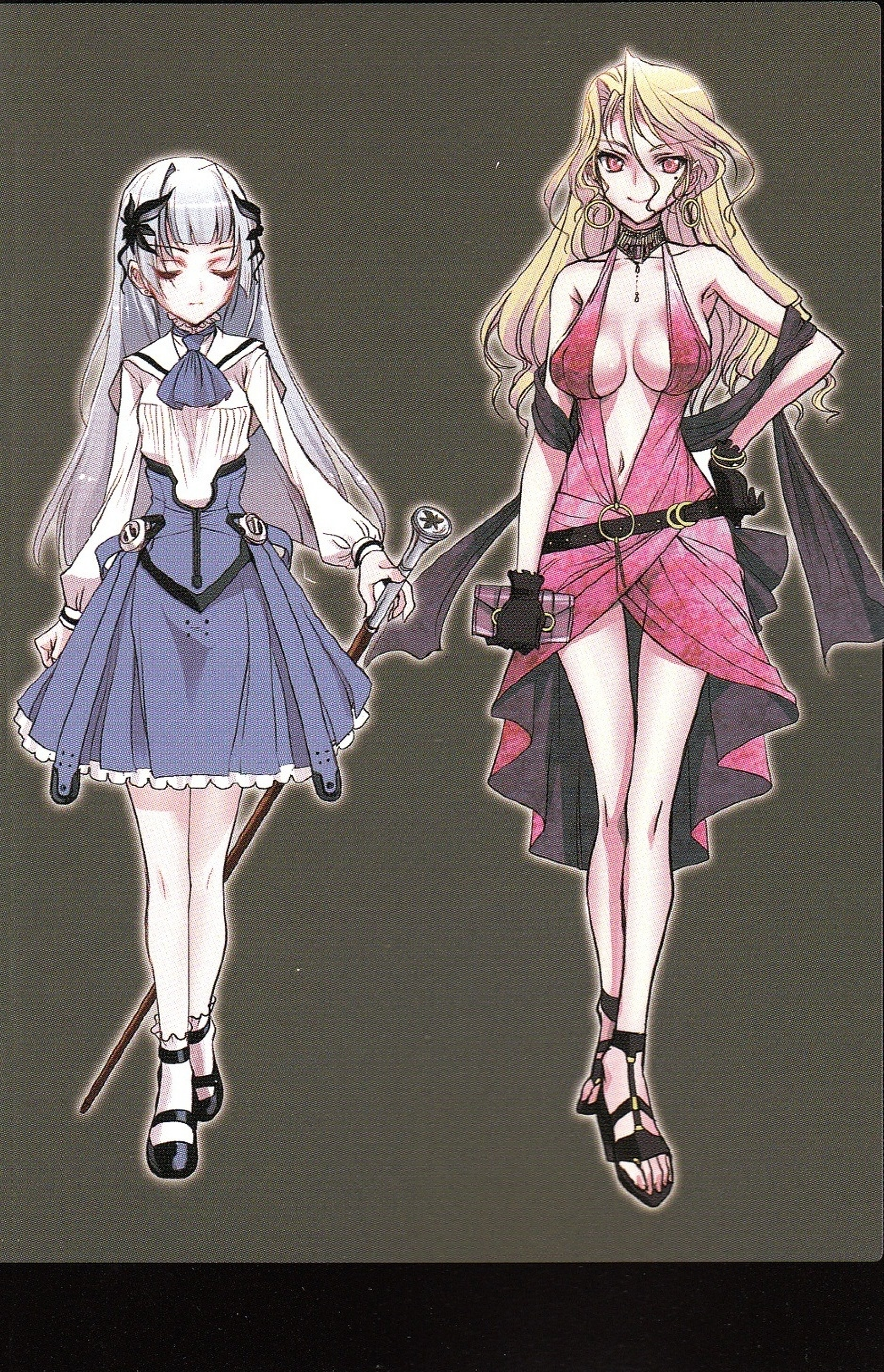
SHIROKISHI

篠ノ之 束が製造した全ての原型となる世界最初のIS。製造者以外、パイロット、所属組織、目的も全て謎のままであるが、その容姿から「白騎士」と呼ばれるようになった。

唯一世界にその姿を現した白騎士事件の記録に拠ると、最新のISと比較して小型で極めて人間に近いシルエット、 フルフェイスでパイロットの素顔を完全に隠した頭部、スカート状の大型アクティブスラスターもしくはシールドと思われるパーツ、武装として一振の大型プラズマブレードを装備している等の外見が確認されている。各部から露出したリング状パーツからの放電現象は余剰エネルギーの放出と思われる。

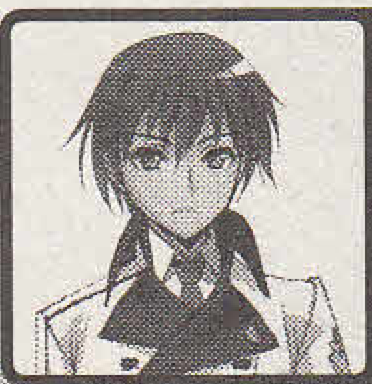


和名：白騎士
型式：n/a
世代：第零世代
国家：n/a
分類：n/a
装備：近接プラズマブレード
装甲：n/a
仕様：n/a



Squall MEUSEL Right

Left Chloe CHRONICLE

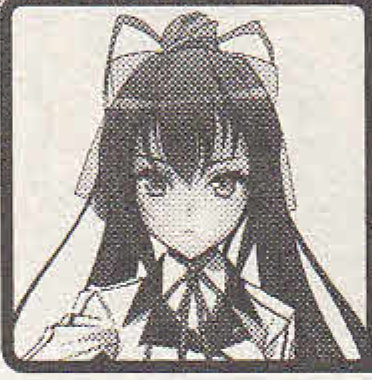


織斑一夏 おりむら・いちか

世界で唯一ISを動かせる男子。

専用IS【白式】

Ichika ORIMURA

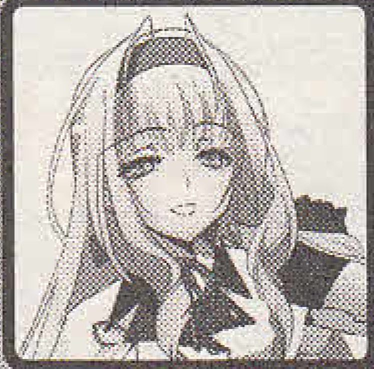


篠ノ之箒 しののの・ほうき

一夏の幼なじみ。

専用IS【紅椿】

Houki SHINONONO

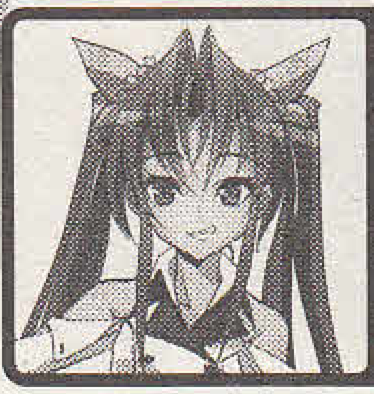


セシリア・オルコット

イギリス代表候補生

専用IS【ブルー・ティアーズ】

Cecilia ALCOTT

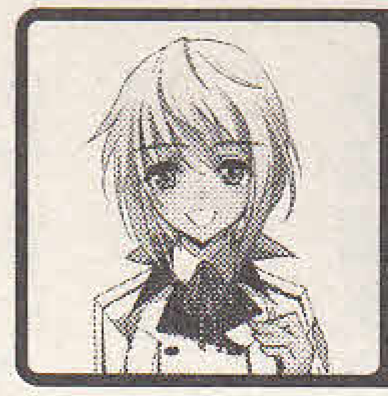


凰鈴音 ファン・リンイン

中国代表候補生

専用IS【甲龍】

Lingyin HUANG

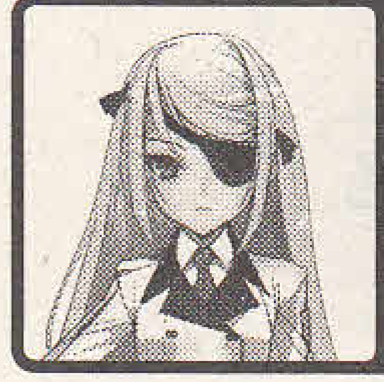


シャルロット・デュノア

フランス代表候補生

専用IS【ラファール・リヴァイヴ・カスタムII】

Charlotte DUNOIS

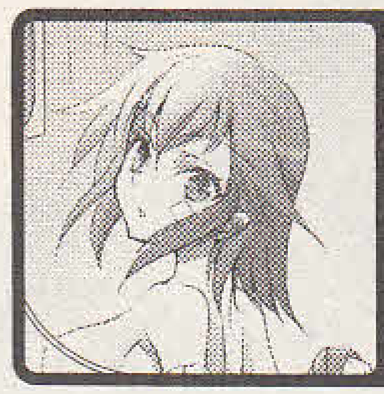


ラウラ・ボーデヴィッヒ

ドイツ代表候補生

専用IS【シュヴァルツェア・レーゲン】

Laura BODEWIG

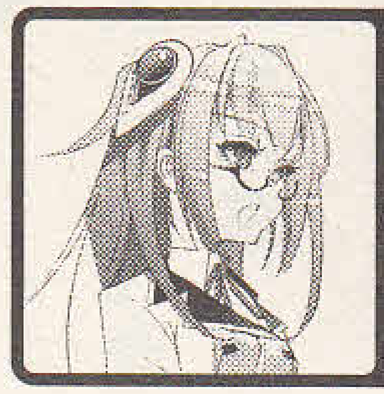


更識楯無 さらしき・たてなし

IS学園生徒会長

専用IS【ミステリアス・レイディ】

Tatenashi SARASHIKI



更識簪 さらしき・かんざし

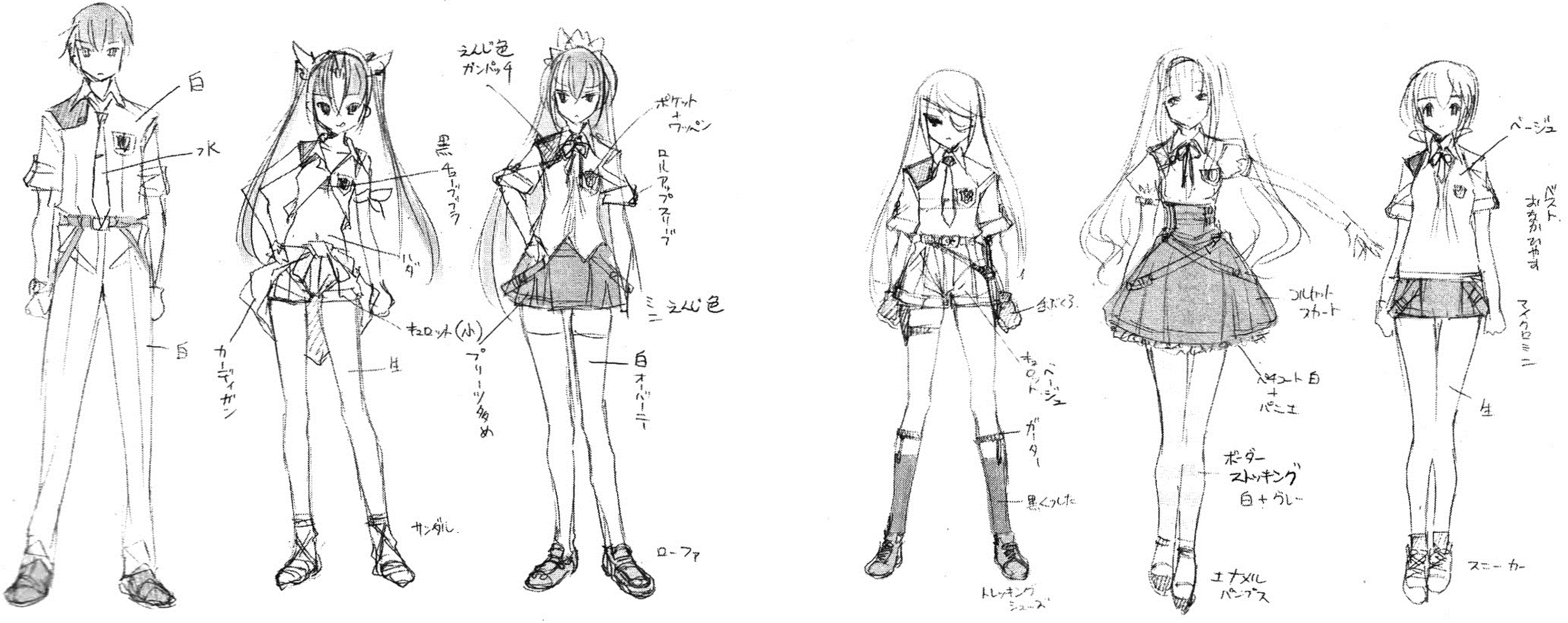
日本代表候補生

専用IS【打鉄弐式】

Kanzashi SARASHIKI

件名	日付
IS学園夏服設定	：2013/ お正月
	時刻
■ラフ □クリンナップ □修正	：朝日が眩しい。
CHOCO MUGITANI KOICHI	chocolateshop@mac.com http://chocolateshop-float.com

IS 第 1 巻の季節は春で冬服を着用。
第 2 巻からは季節は夏で 6 月に夏服に衣替え。
第 5 巻の学園祭以降は再び冬服に戻ります。

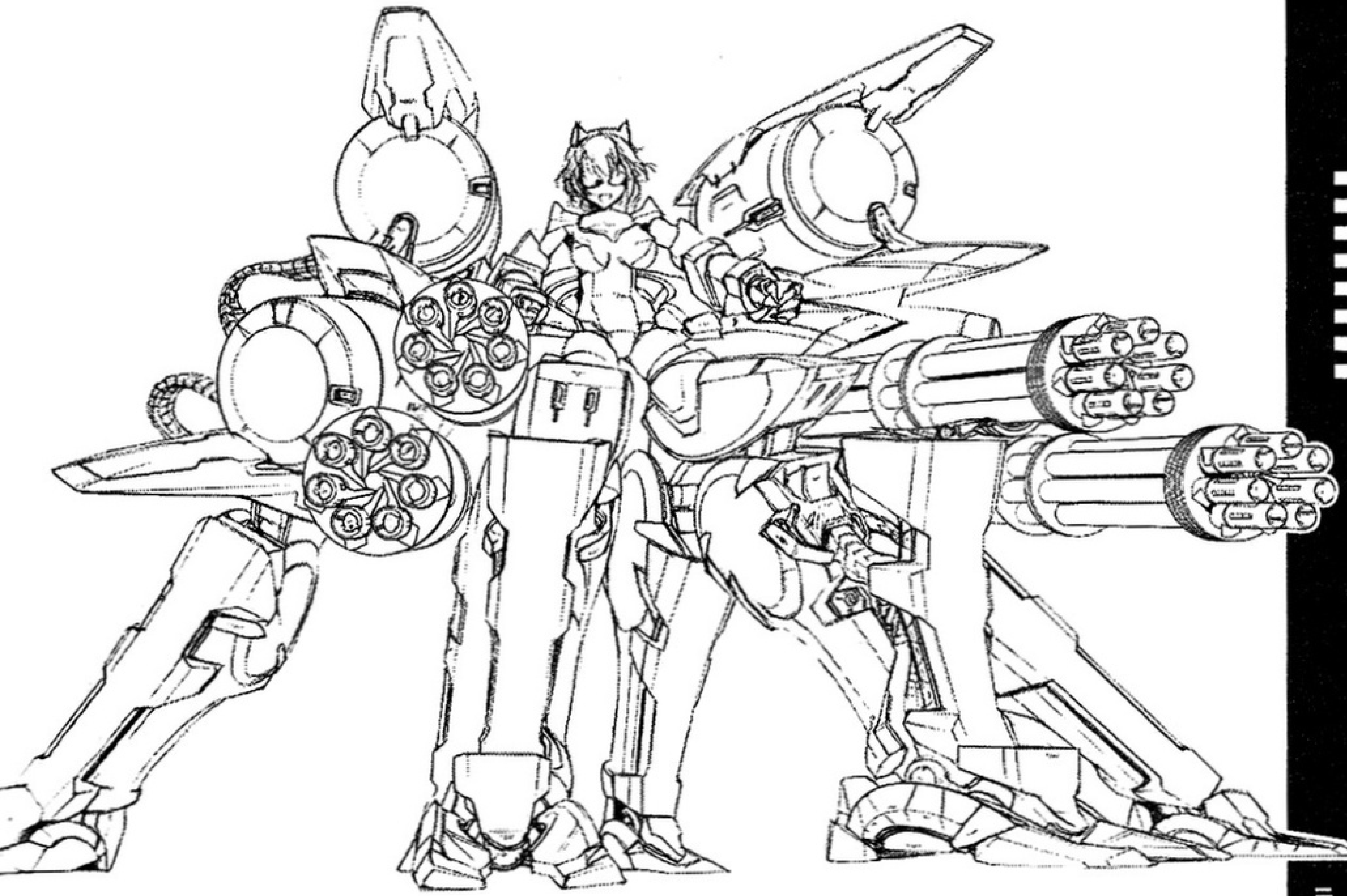

白
水
白
黒 チューブブラ
ハダ
キュロット(小)
カーディガン
生
サンダル
えんじ色 ガンパッチ
ポケット＋ワッペン
ロールアップスリーブ
ミニ えんじ色
プリーツ多め
白 オーバーニー
ローファ
手ぶくろ
キュロット ベージュ
ガーター
黒くつした
トレッキングシューズ
コルセットスカート
ペチコート白＋パニエ
ボーダーストッキング 白＋グレー
エナメルパンプス
ベージュ
ベスト おなかがひやす
マイクロミニ
生
スニーカー

一夏　　鈴　　箒　　ラウラ　　セシリア　　シャル

件名	日付
【祝】第8巻発売！	：2013/ 次女が生まれました。
	時刻
□ラフ　□クリンナップ　■あとがき	：その日も働くパパ
CHOCO MUGITANI KOICHI	chocolateshop@mac.com http://chocolateshop-float.com

他の巻よりも桃色率の高くけしからんカラー口絵とガンオイル臭いハードな口絵、両方大変作画に時間がかかりました。しかも描いている真っ最中に仕事場の隣の産婦人科で次女が生まれる試練。桃色！メカ！赤ちゃん！桃色！おぎゃー

CHOCO



カラーページで千冬先生の影に隠れてしまった山田先生の６本脚ラファールリヴァイブ＋クアッドガトリングの勇姿がこちらになります。

Chapter 1: But Weirdness Happens Daily — Strange Days Again

"So?"

"..."

After school, at the open air area of the canteen, Kanzashi was facing the fuming Rin.

Without any explanation, she had been brought here and then was treated like this. As the "shy" personality of hers was being clearly exposed, she trembled while cringing.

(Why... am I experiencing a situation like this...)

By the way, Rin was not the only one present. Houki, Cecilia, Charlotte and Laura, these familiar faces, were also around.

If a certain person were to join them, all of the first-year personal-IS pilots would be gathered here. Seven people in total, which also meant seven IS machines. A number that only a handful of militaristic countries can barely compare themselves to.

"Err, Rin, could you calm down? You are scaring Kanzashi-san."

Charlotte stood up and expressed her gentle nature to comfort everybody.

"Stop it, Charlotte. I'm already holding back the desire of resorting to torture and truth serum right now."

Crossing her arms and standing up, the angry Laura shot down Charlotte's words.

Even so, she was acting a lot gentler than how she would usually act, which was by using her bayonet.

"Don't say that, Laura. Here, Kanzashi-san, have some orange juice. You must be thirsty, right?"

"..."

Kanzashi looked up at Charlotte timidly. Seeing this, Charlotte revealed a kind smile.

(Well... This person doesn't seem to be bad...)

She thought, as she began drinking the orange juice.

On her second mouthful, Charlotte, maintaining her gentle smile, asked:

"Keep going. So what exactly is going on?"

Smile~

"...?"

Not understanding the question, Kanzashi returned a clumsy smile while tilting her head.

At the same time, Cecilia and Houki stood up, outraged.

"I-I-I am saying! W-Wi-With Ichika that! "

"I-I-In a relationship?!"

"——!?"

To be suddenly asked such a question, Kanzashi blinked in surprise and then gasped. After a while, her face turned red.

"M-Me and Ichika... are not like that..."

"*Ichika*?"

Rin repeated in surprise.

(What's wrong with this person, suddenly calling him by his first name. Doesn't it seem too intimate? ... Wait, come to think of it, am I not the same? ... Well, it's not such a big deal... Yeah.)

Boiling a second prior, then returning back to calm the next second.

Then, as the five people, boiling again, stared at Kanzashi, the latter could not help but continue to shrink .

"Thi-This... is... aah... though I do not bear such thoughts... in short, it is like this..."

The usually soft-voiced Kanzashi, under the pressure of the five people in front of her, had her voice become even softer.

Her last few words could not be heard. But seeing her lowering face, which became red, while fiddling with her fingers, everyone confirmed something.

——"Aah, another rival, huh?"

"..."

Kanzashi, like a frightened little animal, curled up.

The five, now aware that Kanzashi was not actually in a relationship with Ichika and seeing her in such a pitiful state, frantically tried to change the topic.

"Ah, um. Sarashiki... -san?"

"Kanzashi... Please just call me Kanzashi..."

Houki asked in a state of panic while Kanzashi replied in the same state as well.

"Th-Then, just call us by our names as well. It's fine, right?"

"Ah, uun..."

Facing the outspoken Rin, Kanzashi replied in a slightly louder tone.

"Bu-But, thinking back, to suddenly bring you here was a little bit rude."

"I'm just, just a little shocked..."

Faced with an unnatural smile from Cecilia, Kanzashi, also feeling sorry for making them worry, responded with an awkward smile.

"Ah——, um, do you want another cup of juice?"

"No, no need..."

As Charlotte handed over the menu, Kanzashi gently waved her hand to decline.

"Sa-Say. Since we are all first-years, why don't we all have some combat training together?"

"Ah, um. Thank you..."

Holding her arms, Laura sat back down. Her strong yet gentle voice made Kanzashi nod twice.

"Ahh..."

By coincidence, all six of them let out a sigh of relief.

All six individuals thus carried a slightly shocked expression, releasing it only after a brief moment.

"This is kinda strange, isn't it?"

Charlotte said this at the perfect timing, reaching her hand out to Kanzashi.

"From today onwards, I'll be in your care."

"Ye-Yes... I'll be in your care..."

Seeing those two shake hands, the rest nodded in agreement.

Thus, a problem that weighed the heart was solved and a new competitor and companion was born.

"Huu... huu..."

Ichika, even as the morning sun started shining into his room, was still silently sleeping.

In his room, a trespasser with her presence perfectly hidden was also present.

"..."

This person was none other than Laura Bodewig.

Even though this was not the first time she committed the crime of trespassing, this definitely was the first time she challenged to enter in her black cat-eared pajamas.

Due to this challenge, she was also in high spirits.

(Calm down, calm down... Act just like the usual, just like in training...!)

Repeating these words in her heart, Laura slowly entered into the sleeping Ichika's blanket.

"Biii——. Intruder. Intruder."

Suddenly, an electronic voice sounded.

"Wha? What——? This is?!"

*Bang! * Expanding like a balloon, the blanket pushed Laura down.

"Uh, uuuu..."

Even though she tried to push it away, the expanding force was just too great and thus made pushing it away impossible.

Moreover, with both her hands pressed down by it, she had no way of drawing out her knife.

"Why, why you..."

To be able to set such a trap, among the people Laura knew, there was only one person who could do it.

"Ah hahaha, you fell for it Laura-chan!"

Laughter came from the shower room.

"Sa-Sarashiki Tatenashi..."

"That's right! I am Sarashiki Tatenashi! IS Academy student council president and also the strongest——"

Ichika's groans of pain overwhelmed Tatenashi's voice at this point, "I'm saying, if you don't do something soon, I think I'm going to die..."

""Ah.""

*Bang! *

This sound rang throughout the whole first year dormitory.

"Ah, that was horrible..."

Still rubbing my hurting head, I changed into my gym clothes in the locker room.

There was a physical check-up scheduled later.

"..."

Here, a problem arose.

That is, why was I chosen as an assistant for the check-up?

WHY-AM-I the assistant for all things the physical check-up!!

"Huhuhu."

Aah, a certain demonic student council president suddenly came into mind.

(Because, if you think about it, 「physical would definitely mean a certain three sizes, right? How could you even allow such a thing, IS Academy!)

Thinking this, I sat alone in a certain classroom waiting .

At this time——,

"Ah, I'm so sorry Orimura-kun. I was sorting out the documents and lost track of time."

"Eh!? Yamada-sensei!?"

As she said this, Yamada-sensei entered the classroom.

"Ah! So Yamada-sensei is in charge of measurements right!? Thank goodness, at least this academy still has some conscience left."

"Yes. I will work hard recording!"

"... Eh?"

"Yup! I'm only responsible for recording! "

Wh-Wh-Wh...?

"JUST WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THIS ACADEMY THINKIIIIIIIIING!?"

My plea seemed all so useless just as a group of girls entered the classroom noisily.

"Ah, Orimura-kun!"

"Oh, so it's really Orimura-kun who is taking measurements?"

"Eeeeeeh, so it's like this!? I might have eaten a little too much last night!"

"YAHOO, Orimura~. Hehe~, Tatenashi-chan's big surprise is a total success~"

I've never felt a greater urge to blow that person sky high than now.

"Okay, everyone please be quiet~. We're now going to take measurements for the IS suits, so please do not wear any unnecessary clothing ok~? "

Yamada-sensei happily announced to everyone. But to me, this was no different to a death sentence.

"Gym clothes must be taken off, please be in your undergarments only, ok~?"

Yes, I'm dead. I'm so dead.

"Ah, everyone will enter that cubicle one at a time. Follow the order of undress, measure and redress. All will be done in there. Thus there will be no worries of being seen in underwear by anyone~."

"Yamada-sensei, won't you be able to see them!?"

Orimura Ichika shouted in rage, renewing his determination to get away from this atrocious situation.

After all, Orimura Ichika is a person who can never understand a woman's heart. A guy through and through.

And also a guy who has spent almost all of his days playing around with other boys only. Making him all the more sensitive to the bodies of women even when compared to the average guy.

——«Run! Ichika»[1], Dazai-sensei, you are the best. It would be my great honour to meet you at heaven.

"You see, I'll just be behind this curtain. All Orimura needs to do is say out the measurements."

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME!?"

I was no longer in a state of rage or indignation, but had begun to slightly lose it.

"What's all the commotion about..."

"This voice is, Chifuyu-nee——Ah!"

"It's Orimura-sensei!"

My neck endured the great feeling of a hand chop. Ah, what a great feeling. About at a 32 degree angle.

"You brat, are you still not happy even after getting this kind of job?"

"No, there is obviously something wrong here! I was set up!"

"Really... Are those the words a guy should say?"

"Ugh...!"

"Why can't you just say「I'll do it and show you! or the like?"

——OK, Chifuyu-nee!

"Fine! I'll really do it and show youuuuuu!"

The beast in my heart awakened!

"Is that so? Then good luck! "

"Eh? Eh? Huh?"

"Didn't you just say you will do it?"

"Ah..."

Being stared down by that gaze, no words escaped my mouth. Can I no longer escape this fate of being under the scythe of the reaper?

"Don't looked so despaired. Come on, why don't you use this to cover your eyes."

"——Ooh."

To be given such an amazing thing! As expected of Chifuyu-nee!

"I'll leave first then."

Watching Chifuyu-nee as she left, I saluted to her.

Thank you Chifuyu-nee! No, thank you Orimura-sensei!

(Now then, let's use it to cover my eyes...)

——Eh?

"Isn't? Isn't this half-transparenttttttt!?"

I could hear Chifuyu-nee's laughter clearly in the corridor.

W-What's with all these people!

"Index number 1, Aikawa Kiyoka, it's my turn!"

"Wa-Wait-Wait a sec!"

"Eeh~, so slow."

Walking into the measuring area, Aikawa Kiyoka-san was clearly only wearing her undergarments: bra and panties.

(That-That's right! It will be fine if I just do it with my eyes closed! Use the mind's eye! The inner third eye!)

I closed my eyes tightly and picked up the measuring tape.

"Th-Then, here we go."

"Ok~."

Squish.

"——Huh?"

"Hyah!? O-Orimura-kun, what are you doing all of a sudden!?"

"Eh, ah. No, this is——"

Squish squish.

A soft full feeling slowly spread throughout my hand.

"..."

Squish squish squish.

"I-I said, don't... aah~!"

——Ah, I'm dead meat.

"Ichika!!!! Why youuu!!!!!"

Said Houki.

"Ichika-san, what are you doing!?"

Said Cecilia.

"Ichika you pervert! Unbelievable!"

Said Char.

"——Ichika, get ready to die."

Said Laura.

Here they come! What's the action!?

1. Fight
2. Kill
3. Defend
4. Escape

→4. Escape!

"I'm getting—— out of hereeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!!"

Ichika dead sound effect

"Ooh, for Ichika to have died in such a pitiful way."

You-You are!?

"Dai*** Osamu."

Eeh!?

"Just kidding."

——Ah, it's like this.

"But, to be thrown into such a state of panic just because you see a little girl in her undies is truly humiliating. You are a real failure as a 「man."

Ah. You definitely aren't Dai***-sensei after all——

"Ichika... Ichika, please wake up..."

Who's calling me...

"C'mon, get up! Wake up, Ichika!!"

"——Ha!?"

Thwack! Just as I was about to get up, I received a straight punch to the face.

"W-What are you doing, Rin!?"

"Don't ask me! You're the only one who needs their body measurements done! Just how much longer do you plan on sleeping?"

Rin exposed with a suddenly angry expression.

Say, isn't this the nurse's office?

"I said, hurry and take of your clothes! I-I'll personally help take your measurements!"

"Ah... Ok."

Not knowing if it's due to the fact I was still in a daze after just waking up, I followed Rin's instructions and began taking off my clothes.

"I-Idiot! There's no need to take off the bottom!"

"Ah, right."

Well, of course.

"Really, just what are you doing, you... hurry and raise your hands!"

"'Kay..."

Before me, Rin was dressed in IS Academy gym clothes: a.k. a bloomers.

The soft yet elegant curves of her body were clearly evident, reminiscent of a cat, and gave off the feeling of a healthy beauty.

Moderately tight thighs, showing off a sense liveliness, quite a real feast for the eyes.

"Let's see, what a broad chest... Hey, Ichika!"

"Eh?"

"Y-Your face is all red and your nose is bleeding! Wait and let me check your temperature!"

"Sure..."

What the, I feel weird.

My body... is not...

Moving as...

I want it to...

Collapse

"Hey, what happened! Hey, Ichika! Wake up!"

"Like I said, just leave watchout to me!"

"Why should Houki be the one!"

"Rin-san, you have no right to say that! Did you not had your turn back at the nurse's office? Please pass this chance to others!"

"Can everyone keep it down a little...!"

"No, I will never pass my bride to anyone!"

... ugh.

"Ugh..."

I forced a little sound.

"Oh, Ichika! Have you come to?"

"Hey, are you ok?!"

"Ichika-san! Are you really alright?!"

"Are, are you okay, Ichika?"

"Should I help replenish liquids first or nutrients?"

Chattering...

"So noisy..."

I said, sliding off the bed.

"Really, you guys! Don't disturb me as I take care of Ichika! Please get out!"

"What?! Houki, you should be the one getting out!"

"Both of you quiet down!"

"I say, let's first help lift Ichika back onto the bed!"

"Looking after an injured bride is a husband's job! Leave it to me!"

The dispute continued to intensify.

In my hazy consciousness, I heard the sound of the door opening.

——zhi da da da.

"You guys——"

Pa.

"Really——"

Pa, pa.

"Enough is enough!"

Pa, pa.

"Get out. ——Kanzashi-chan, please lift Ichika's legs for me."

Ah... it's Tatenashi-san and Kanzashi...

"..."

It seems everybody's head was hit by that folding fan of hers, seeing how they all had some look of dissatisfaction and remained silent.

"Since it already came to this, please stop trying to do anything silly to make it worse, okay?"

""""Ok...""""

"Since you understand, please leave immediately."

The five, with their enthusiasm deflated, left the room one after another.

My memory became a little vague after this, but it seems that Tatenashi-san and Kanzashi continued to look after me after returning me onto the bed.

Tatenashi helped me replenish my liquids and fed me food while Kanzashi placed a wet towel on my forehead.

"This..."

Trying to say something, I struggled to sit up.

"Don't force yourself up. Get some rest."

"Yes... That, it's about those guys..."

"Hmm?"

"How should I say this... please don't scold them too severely... even though they don't get along at times, they're still good people..."

At this very point, I wanted to make sure that there was no misunderstandings.

"... Haa."

With a face that said "I just can't believe you," Tatenashi-san sighed.

"——Is what he said, you five in the hallway."

Creaking sounds could be heard as the door shook slightly.

"Nee-san... why not let them in..."

"You're right. They should have fully reflected on their actions by now."

Just as Tatenashi-san said this, the five entered the room.

"That is, I'm sorry Ichika..."

"It, it's my bad."

"Sorry, Ichika-san."

"I'm wrong..."

"Apologies."

Everyone lowered their head to show that they were truly sorry.

"It's fine."

I replied with a weak smile.

"Really, this is how you attract us."

"Fu, fu."

Tatenashi-san showed a smile more beautiful than usual.

A few days later, a joint IS training class was held for all of the first-year students.

In the arena, every single first-year was present, lined in a straight line with Chifuyu-nee standing in front with arms crossed as usual.

"Orimura, Shinonono, Alcott, Huang, Dunois, Bodewig, Sarashiki! Step forward!"

As soon as class started, Chifuyu-nee called out all the personal IS users.

"During the incident a few days ago, all of your IS units sustained serious damage. So due to repairs, you're all not allowed to use your IS."

""Yes!""

This was something that everyone understood even without saying.

As if to prove this point, everyone replied without hesitation.

"Then, it's about time... Yamada-sensei."

"Yes! Everyone, please look this way!"

Saying this, Yamada-sensei, standing in front of a cargo container placed behind Chifuyu, waved her hands in a "look here!" manner.

From the moment everyone gathered in the arena, they were curious of what was inside the container. Now that its contents were finally coming to light, a commotion naturally erupted. After all, grabbing any chance to talk was a distinct trait of all maidens.

"What could be inside?"

"Could it be a new IS model?!"

"Eh——? If it was, then it wouldn't be in a cargo container, but an IS stand right?"

"What? What is it? How strange?! How very strange!"

... these last words carried no meaning. Said just for the sake of saying.

"Quiet! ... Really, can't you guys just keep your mouths shut? Yamada-sensei, please open it!"

"Yes! Then, open sesame!"

Not understanding Yamada-sensei's words, everyone stood stunned.

Seeing this reaction, a tear formed on Yamada-sensei's eyes as she pressed the remote controller.

"Uuu, this generation gap sure is painful..."

Powered by a motor in the container, the heavy metal door began to open with a buzzing sound.

"This, this is..."

Ichika let out a surprised voice.

"... What is this?"

Bang! Chifuyu's attendance book attacked, causing 30 damage to Ichika.

Rubbing his head, Ichika looked at the container once again. What was inside was something that resembles metal armor.

"Instructor, this is——"

"Call me Orimura-sensei."

It seems Laura has seen this armor before. Being called by the name back when she was training the German army accidentally, Chifuyu shot a stare towards Laura.

Being shot by such a harsh expression from her beloved Chifuyu, Laura immediately shut her mouth.

"This is the offensive armored exoskeleton developed by the United Nations, 'EOS'."

"EOS...?"

“Extended Operation Seeker. Known as EOS, it is mainly designed for disaster relief and peace keeping operations. However, branching out the suit's usage is under consideration”

"Then, Orimura-sensei, what are we supposed to do with it...?"

Houki asked conservatively.

Right after, she received this simple answer.

"Operate it."

"Eh!?"

All seven — Ichika and the girls — replied in unison.

"Don't make me repeat myself. These are the orders of the academy's higher ups; they want a report on these things' practical operation data. Since you guys can't use your personal machines anyway, why not help me with this report?"

"O, oh..."

Finally receiving an answer they could understand, the seven nodded their heads.

Maya then walked forward and clapped her hands together as she began to give orders to the rest.

"Ok. Everyone please form groups for the mock battle ~. And bring out the training machines from the hangar~ ."

Wanting to witness the EOS's capability, the girls let out an "eh" sound of unwillingness. However, they sprung to work as soon as they received Chifuyu's stare.

To the seven personal IS users who were still pondering about the armor, Chifuyu used the attendance book to knock their heads to hasten them.

"Hurry up, you idiots. We don't have all day, or could it be that you guys can't pilot these on such short notice?"

"That, that can't be, Orimura-sensei. As representative cadets, how could we possibly not know how to pilot such weaponry?"

Cecilia confidently asserted.

"Oh really. Try it then."

Seeing Chifuyu smile secretly, everyone began to feel a certain sense of extreme terror, but they all went to their allocated machines and worked into them.

When manipulating the armor, it gave a sensation no different from lifting heavy metals. Lacking being able to move freely, their brows naturally furrowed.

"Uuu, this is...!"

"Thi, this..."

"He, heavy."

"Ah, this must be a joke right..."

"How, how difficult to move..."

Ichika, Houki, Cecilia, Rin and Charlotte ran into trouble operating EOS. Simply because they were just too heavy.

Well, of course it felt that way. An EOS had more weight compared to an IS. Not to mention, IS's are equipped with the PIC's (Passive Inertia Control) anti-gravity system, and all IS parts also have auxiliary drives and auxiliary power to minimize loading. Therefore, one could operate it without worrying about it's weight.

In contrast, the EOS, in one sentence, is a big block of metal.

Even if auxiliary drives were to be fitted, the difference was still as clear as day.

In addition, the auxiliary power generator couldn't remain on for long periods of time with the EOS.

Furthermore, compared to the IS, which is equipped with the Direct Motion System so the suit could move faster than the pilot's body could, the movement of the armor, which did not have this system, seemed to lag behind the manipulation of the operator.

To top it off, the main weight problem is largely due to the huge box at the back of the armor. Called the next generation PPB (Portable Plasma Battery), just the weight of one plasma cell inside is already 30 kilograms.

Even so, the EOS only have an operation cycle of 10 minutes.

In this situation, everyone grew to understand how superior IS was.

"..."

However, compared to the others, the only remark Laura had for the EOS was an "ok".

"Then let's begin testing the EOS in a mock war situation. By the way, the only protection is the armor, so no one is allowed to aim directly at unarmored parts. Even though we're using paint bullets, getting hit will really sting."

Chifuyu clapped her hands to order everyone to get ready. At a moment's notice, a loud "Start!" resounded. Upon this signal, Laura used the roller blades on the machine to close in on Ichika who was still fighting with the controls of the armor.

"What!?"

"Humph. Too late!"

Laura turned to avoid a weak counter punch and drove right in front of Ichika.

She then lowered her waist and attacked his legs with a sweep.

"Ah!"

As Ichika fell, Laura took out the semi-automatic assault rifle equipped on the EOS, fired a burst of 3 bullets and retreated. The next target was Cecilia.

"It's over!"

"I will not be defeated so easily!"

Using the assault rifle which was set on full-auto, it was impossible for Cecilia to aim properly.

"Damn! What enormous recoil...!"

Typically, any IS-related shooting reaction force would be automatically offset by the machine's body, the PIC's reaction controls and the automatic balancing systems of the IS.

However, the EOS did not have such convenient systems. Thus, all actions and their resulting forces had to be controlled directly with the body.

"Ah, really! Even though it's just a normal live ammunition gun, operating it is enough to throw up!"

Even though she was hesitant at the start, Cecilia was still a national IS Representative Cadet. And thus, she had also experienced combat training in the military which allowed her to get used to the recoil after a while.

But, Laura was far superior. Before Cecilia could get used to the gun, she closed the gap between them.

"Aren't you fast! However, at this distance, I will not miss!"

"Naive."

Different from the turn against Ichika, it was a straight rush this time. Using the physical shield on her left hand to block the bullets, she dashed towards Cecilia using gathered momentum.

"!?"

"Hump..."

Still in her usual graceful posture, Cecilia's shoulder armor was rammed by Laura's straight rush.

"Ah!?"

Losing balance, Cecilia fell to the ground.

Due to the weight of the EOS, it was very difficult to get back up.

Of course, there was a support arm at the back to help one get back up, however, it was already too late. Before she could get up, Cecilia was caught in a rain of bullets from Laura.

"Two down!"

"Hu hu, an opening!"

From Laura's side, Rin rushed in for the assault.

"Take this!"

A straight punch suddenly came into range, however, with a slight tilt of her body, Laura avoided the attack.

"Eeehhh."

Unable to stop from her initial acceleration, Rin tripped and, "Bang" the unavoidable sound of Laura's gun resounded.

"Now all that's left is..."

Laura turned her gaze forward, towards Houki and Charlotte who were standing side by side.

"Who shall I start with?!"

"I, I don't mind going second..."

"Me, me too..."

Charlotte and Houki stood head to head, mutually asking the other to go first.

"Charlotte, why, why don't you go first?"

"No, no need. Houki can go first."

"Don't say that."

"You are being too kind."

"..."

"..."

"Then I shall go first!"

"No, let me go first!"

""You go ahead. No, you go ahead. No, you go ahead." "

Aah, such touching friendship.

But, the person to attack first was Laura.

"Eh?"

By the time Houki and Charlotte had realized this, it was too late.

A low but sharp sound resounded as the roller blades brought Laura closer.

"Eat, eat this!"

"I'm sorry Laura!"

The two formed a temporary team and decided on a shoot-out after seeing the way Rin fell.

Let's first not talk about Charlotte. Houki, being unable to control the recoil of the gun, fell butt first onto the ground.

"You're mine!"

To be expected, a rain of bullets came right after.

"Ouch! Stop, stop it idiot! Ouch! It hurts it hurts it hurts!"

But, Laura mercilessly fired the remaining bullets in the gun at Houki. Subsequently, she threw the empty assault rifle at Charlotte.

"Eeh!"

"Pardon me!"

Laura closed in in an instant, using both her hands to hold down Charlotte who instinctively took a defensive stance.

"Ah, ha ha...!"

"Oh. You guarded against it?"

"Eh, uum..."

"Then let's try it again."

Dong! She mercilessly pushed down the second time.

"Aah!?"

Just like Cecilia, Charlotte fell, back first.

But, as expected of Charlotte, she braced herself just before hitting the ground.

"Ok, that's enough!"

Chifuyu's voice announced the end of the mock battle.

"As expected of Bodewig."

"No, all of this was taught by the instructor when she was in the German army——"

Bang! An attack from the attendance book burst forth.

"It's Orimura-sensei."

"Ye, yes..."

As Laura rubbed her head, the rest took off the EOS and gathered around.

"Laura, have you used the EOS before?"

"I have not, but I have used something similar in the German army. It was mainly during the practical experiments with IS equipment."

Facing Ichika's question, Laura answered fluently. At this point, Charlotte joined in on the conversation.

"Eh, so that's why you're so amazing."

"No, this level can't be considered 'amazing' yet."

"If this is not amazing, then what is? Really."

Having felt utter defeat, Rin could only carry a sad expression.

"I say, you guy, ah... ha, ptz~."

Laura suddenly seemed to be holding back an urge to laugh.

Not understanding the reason, Ichika and the rest looked at each other. No matter what, whether it was their attire or faces, there were paintball ink traces everywhere.

"How, how evil of you Laura... You shot my face on purpose right?"

"I say, you can only blame yourself for getting hit... Ha ha ha~."

Seeing Laura's rare laughing face, Houki and the rest were at a loss.

Shown all over her face was an expression of an ordinary girl playing around with her friends.

"But really, this EOS thing, is there really any practical application for it?"

"I am also very concerned about this point."

Cecilia and Houki used their eyes to inquire Chifuyu.

"Well, in the wake of the limited number of IS available, this thing will show its worth in the fields of rescue activities and the likes."

Not to mention, even with 1000 EOS, it still cannot defeat 1 IS. About this point, it is better not to mention it.

It's tentative basis is also on the conclusion of 'never come into combat against an IS'.

(Really. To have these sent to the IS Academy, they sure are taking some risks.)

Furthermore, it's hard to understand the purpose of the principal in accepting such things.

But, let's not think too much for now.

——before 'that moment' arrives, Chifuyu can't consider too much on this issue.

But of course, some preparations still had to be made.

"..."

Because of such thoughts, she continued to reason in silence. Noticing the look of "we are waiting for further orders" from the members who had taken off the EOS,

"Ah. Then everyone, move the equipment to the second hangar. Use the equipment used to bring them here to bring them back. That's all."

Chifuyu clapped her hands together and everyone began working as ordered.

Even though the container was returned by Maya using an IS, the movement of the equipment still had to be done by hand. Rin let out a clear sound of dissatisfaction. With this, today's practical lesson ended.

"Ah, now that I think about it,"

In the changing room filled with girls after the joint practice, in the shower compartment,

Rin started this conversation.

"In that incident, didn't other personal IS machines receive serious damage as well?"

"There was something like this... ah, Rin! Please don't take my shampoo without permission!"

"Eh——, is there a problem? So the great Cecilia is actually very stingy."

"I am not! I just want you to tell me first!"

"Ah~, expensive shampoo really is the best~."

"Are, are you even listening to me!?"

Putting this problem aside first, the topic Rin brought up seems to have caught the attention of all the personal IS users present.

"Indeed. I heard that the second and third year personal IS users had to return to their country of origin for emergency repairs."

"U, un... It seems to be the case... however, it seems onee-san used the school's resources to fix hers..."

Kanzashi replied to Laura's words.

"Tatenashi-san's machine belongs to Russia right?"

"I've heard her say that because of international technical cooperation, it also incorporated technology from other countries."

Charlotte and Houki added respectively. Kanzashi added, "Japan's technology, and... There were Italian researchers as well..."

"Italy? Could it be (Tempesta II)...?"

As expected of someone who was in the European next generation IS development race, to hear information about a competitor, Cecilia asked in a hurry. Kanzashi frantically nodded her head and answered.

"Un. The model was based after (Tempesta)... Just the machine, though."

The pilot of that model was Chifuyu's finals opponent in both the first and second Mondo Grosso. That (Tempesta).

She was also one of the rare few machines with a One-Off Ability, renounced world Number 2 and like Chifuyu's machine at that time, it was a pure offensive-type, using raw power to overwhelm its opponents.

Because she had such strengths, she dared to openly announce that the strongest was still undecided between her and Chifuyu. However, she also seems to have declined being the winner of the second Mondo Grosso.

Thus, when mentioning the "Strongest in the world", it is widely believed to be Chifuyu.

"Aah, but aren't those liquid nano machines something like the VT System?"

Charlotte's careless reasoning or should it be said natural direction of thought, caused Cecilia to shiver.

It seems she had reached the same conclusion in her heart.

"Because, to use emotions to control the flow of energy and that, aren't they the same thing?"

"Is, is it like this..."

"That said, aren't they the closest to perfecting it now?"

——crack.

It seems that Rin had stepped on a landmine in Cecilia's heart, or should it be said ripped through it.

"... Rin-san."

"Ah, what is it?"

"I'm never lending you my shampoo again."

"Eh?"

"Bath soap, hair conditioner, face cream, hand cream, towel, lotion, perfume, money. I am never lending anything to you ever again!"

'Eeeehhh? Why? Hey, why? Uuu, I will be really troubled by this..."

"..."

"Don't ignore me!"

As expected, such an opinion on the topic of this importance to Cecilia could not be ignored or forgiven. Rin now faced the full fury of Cecilia.

But, as expected of British royalty, once they made a decision, it would be very hard to change it.

Ignoring Rin who was making a racket, Laura washed off the shampoo and put on her eye patch.

"Now that you mention it, I have received the troop's orders. I might have to return to Germany sometime soon."

"Oh, is that so? Then be sure to bring back some souvenirs for them."

"Un, yes. My platoon mates asked me to buy many things."

"What is it that they want?"

Rarely seen, Houki was interested in Laura's topic. For her home country to leave such a strong impression on others was something to be happy about.

"Mocha and Yatsuhashi [2], Imagawayaki[3] and Kompeito[4]. Then there's Taiyaki and Dorayaki, Yokan[5], An-pan, Steamed Bun, Rice cake, Rice cracker, Warabimochi[6], Dango, Maltose candy..."

Watching Laura recount the requests with her fingers, Charlotte and Houki became stiff.

"Why, why do I get the feeling that the requests are all strange...?"

"Even though they are of the Special Forces, it seems they are all still girls at heart..."

"Aah, I almost forgot the thing Clarissa asked for!"

"What, what is it?"

"Shachihoko[7]."

"What...?"

Houki and Charlotte were stunned.

However, Laura repeated seriously.

"Shachihoko. What, you don't know? It is something that is like the protecting spirit of ancient japan. If one has this thing, he will have something akin to a impregnable defense. It also seems to play an important part on the strong defense of olden time Japanese castles. "

(Could this mean it was just a talisman to ward off disasters...?)

(Laura's vice commander seems to be totally wrong when it comes to this topic...)

"Then, where is it sold?"

"No no, that thing is not for sale."

"Is that so? Then it is fine if I snatch it right?"

"How did it end up like this!?"

"I once saw such an example in a manga."

"Laura, you can't copy that manga!"

Even though Charlotte didn't know what manga it was , it was more important to correct the misunderstanding first.

Thus, in the remaining time in the showers, Houki and Charlotte used all their effort to convince Laura.

Laura, on the other hand, just nodded her head as she muttered "So it is like this."

"Cecilia! People have already apologized, but why are you still like this!"

"Just when, where, and who apologized to me!?"

Looking at Rin and Cecilia, who were still fighting even while changing, Houki, Charlotte, Laura and Kanzashi put on their undergarments.

Because of the variety of colors shown at this point, it gives off a bright and refreshing feel only present in 10 odd year old girls.

To put it simply, it would be——'beyond what words could describe'.

"This is..."

Let's not talk about the IS Academy, but this research center is very far from the town center. I have to take a tram for an hour and then a bus ride for another hour, which led me to this deep forest in the middle of nowhere.

"It should be right here......?"

I carefully compared the map and the research center's signboard.

"Kuromochi Research Center .... Hmm. Spot on."

That's right————- today I am here at Byakushiki's research center.

Today is a working day and I should be in school but for some reason, I got special permission to go out.

(Byakushiki's overall maintenance? What exactly has to be done?)

I was thinking of going near to the entrance but the entrance was blocked by some white wall.

There's no door handle, doorbell or even a surveillance camera.

"How am I going to get in......"

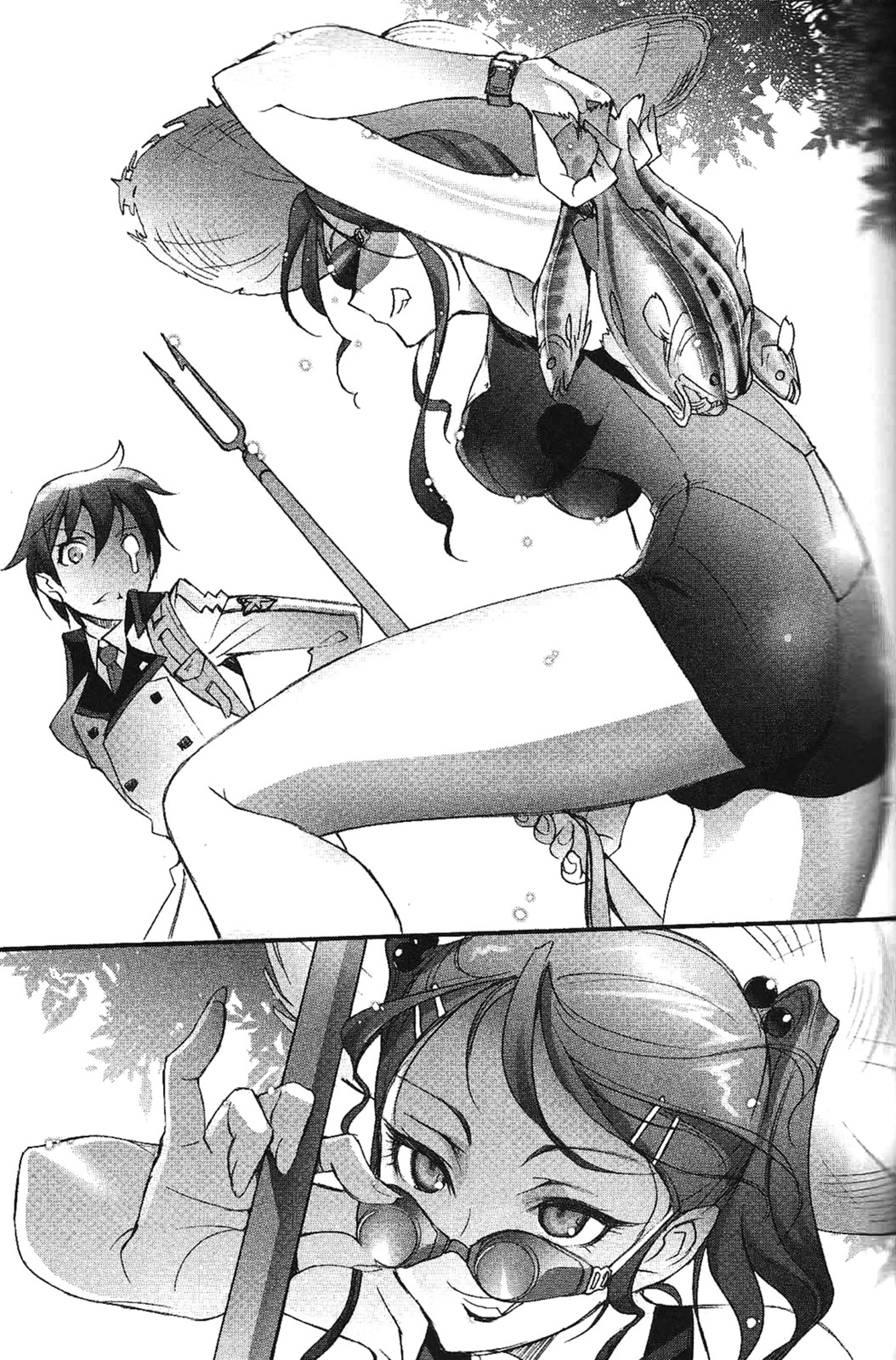
——gropegropegrope!

"Wha!?"

I nearly fell down due to the fact that my butt was just groped by someone.

I manage to recover my balance and at my rear, there's a girl wearing swimming goggles (or black sunglasses models).

"What, what, what.......!?"



"Fufufufu. Underage boys' small butts are awesome."

She grins and her grinning smile is almost like the crescent moon.

When she grins, she revealed her unusually long canine teeth as if they're Dracula's.

"What are you trying to do!?"

"What am I trying to do? Can't you see what I'm doing ?"

She's wearing a school swimsuit with a deep blue IS shirt. On her bosom, there is [Kagaribi] nametag.

What makes me even more surprised is that she is all wet from top to bottom.

Not just plain wet, her right hand is holding a harpoon and her left hand is holding five or six freshwater fish.

The water just kept on dripping on the floor and her damp hair curled and warped up like wakame.

(....... No matter how you look at her, she is a weirdo or should you say a pervert.....)

I want to maintain some distance from her.

But this pervert....... she quickly closes the distance between us.

"Fu——mu."

"Um, um..."

"Fumu, fumu, fu——mu."

"..........."

While I am slowly immersed in an extremely weird atmosphere, the door behind me suddenly opens.

"Director! What are you are doing out here!"

This man in his 30's comes running by and when he sees me, he gives out an [ah] exclamation.

"You, you are Orimura-kun!? Orimura Ichika-kun!"

"Yes, yes."

"Really! Please forgive us. Last time, we said that the director will be the one to receive you, but this person here is just another ordinary pervert."

Woah—— to even speak like that so bluntly!

"Shut up, gramps."

While she said that, she waved her spear and then throwing it aside...... What the!? This, this person is really dangerous!

"Come, come here, bishonen. Why don't you come into my room and we can have some 'fun' time together!"

"What are you referring to with this 'fun' thing?"

I have to admit that those boobs really captivate me.

"Baba-nuki"

"It's too boring with just two people!"

"You're right. Ok, let's play some ero games then."

"............"

The male staff and I could only look at her with accusing eyes.

"Iya..... even two persons entering a narrow bathroom is out of the question. A——a—— Japanese laws are too boring!"

This strange woman used her hands to rest her head and pursed her mouth.

There's a short moment where I didn't know how to deal with this embarrassing situation, the male staff then whispered to me:

"Please forgive us. Well, let's go inside. I will serve you juice for you to drink later."

After he apologized to me, he led me into the building.

Inside the building, everything was pure white. The floor, walls and ceiling were all white. Even the lamps were white fluorescent lamps.

(I wonder if it's because this place is Byakushiki's development chamber..... This is strange.)

Bechiya, bechiya, bechiya.

I can hear the wet barefoot steps from my back, almost like a mild horror movie of some sort.

"AH——! Director! Please dry yourself up before entering!"

"Humhahahahah, don't mind it."

"In the end, there's still some mopping to do!"

"You're right. Alright, I will wait here until it dries up."

"But this will take time to dry up!"

"Uhahahahaha!"

It seems that this person is a pain in the neck.

"Um, well, um....... see you later.

"Ui, ui, see you later——"

I carelessly waved at the director before slowly walking along the corridor.

N——fufu. That is really Orimura's younger brother."

After Ichika left, the female director is alone, smiling to herself in the corridor.

When she smiles, she shows her unusually long canine teeth, which mostly give the goose bumps feeling.

"Director! Please dry yourself up with the towel!"

"OK, ok, I am sorry."

After putting her harpoon and fish up in exchange for a towel, she fiercely rubs her body dry.

"You better let me have some good data, Orimura Ichika-kun."

While rubbing her face, this [director] has a profound smile, hidden under her towel.

(Un…)

I waited for 30 minutes after being told to stay in this room.

Just when I was feeling really bored, I thought about doing some push-ups, and got up from the sofa. At this moment, the woman from before entered.

“Sorry for being late! Did I keep you waiting?”

“Ah, yes.”

“…”

“?”

She angrily puffed her cheeks while still wearing the swimming sunglasses from before. It seemed my answer wasn’t satisfactory.

“Seriously, when a female asks you ‘did I keep you waiting’, the correct answer should be ‘I just arrived’!”

“Ha, okay…”

"You must learn these aesthetics, or you won't be popular with the girls."

"Is-is that so…"

"But if it really ends up that way, I'll happily take you in. There won't be any problems at all."

It's really a problematic statement, but I better ignore it for now.

"Then, let's begin!"

The woman draped the white coat over her IS suit. On a side note, she's wearing furry kitty paws slippers on her feet.

Then, she slowly takes off her sunglasses, and finally reveals her eyes.

"Nice to meet you. My name's Kagaribi Hikaruno, the second research facility director of Kuramochi Technology Research Institute, and I'm your sister's classmate in the same year."

Her long and narrow eyes have a smiling intent in it, resembling a cat. The crescent moon like smile showed the long canines within again.

“Onee-san…as in Chifuyu-nee!?”

“Yeah.”

Pochin! The rubber strap of the sunglasses was stretched and loosened, sticking itself onto the head and letting out a sound.

The pair of swimming sunglasses now looks like a helmet.

(No, instead of this!)

“Well, as same-year classmates, you mean the high school days, right?”

“Yes.”

“Then, you’re friends with Tabane-san…”

“No, no no no.”

Hikaruno-san immediately reacts to my words, and shakes her head.

“The term of friends refers to the equal relationship between each other. They can be considered friends to each other in their cases. Shinonono Tabane is a friend to Orimura Chifuyu, and Orimura Chifuyu to Shinonono Tabane. This is a one and only kind of thing.”

Hikaruno-san says this as she wags her finger.

“I can’t match up to those two at all. That’s why we can’t be considered friends, but classmates, just classmates.”

Anyway, it’s best not to talk about this for the time being; Hikaruno-san finishes this topic by saying this, opened the holographic display, and called out an IS maintenance suit. Six mechanic arms silently reach for me.

“Then, please activate your Byakushiki. We’ll now start to repair the damages, optimize the system, and collect data.”

“Ah, yes.”

I gather my concentration and call out Byakushiki. My body’s surrounded by light, and a pure white armor covers me.

“Speaking of which, sorry about the summer. I couldn’t come to IS Academy because of something. Oh my, this really won’t do. We got a big problem!”

“…?”

“Ah, the current trend certainly is cruel.”

I don’t really understand, but this is plausible.

Haa. Hikaruno-san lets out a long sigh, and then turns her stare to the display.

“Hmm, it certainly took a lot of damage. In that case, it’ll be faster to have you take off Byakushiki and let our technicians repair it.”

“Then, how long will it take?”

“Hm? It’ll be done tomorrow or so. Isn’t it easy if we spend an all-nighter on this?”

All-nighter—I don’t think that’s easy.

“Then, let’s get in! Everyone from Kuramochi Technology!”

The sliding door moved aside and let out a hissing sound of air; men and women rushed through the door with frantic footsteps. Their ages vary, but they seemed to be all Japanese.

“Then, go fish for something. You can get a lot in the river nearby.”

She said that and handed a fishing rod over to me. Of course, there was no reel, just a hook and line draping down.

“Please use whatever bait you can find.”

“Oh, then, erm, I’m leaving.”

“Have a nice trip~”

With Hikaruno-san waving her hand to bid me farewell, I left the research room.

"Fishing, huh…"

It's been a while since I last went fishing.

I often went there in my primary school. The first time was with Chifuyu-nee, then Houki, and finally Rin.

(I was busy with a lot of things in secondary school, and couldn't go for a trip.)

I recall as I walk down the hill path, and soon, I hear the sound of water pattering in the river.

"Oh—"

The river sparkled under the sunlight, and there stood a large rock in a wide part of the river.

(It'll be comfy sitting down there and fishing.)

I thought as I can't help but start to look for bait, and start flipping over the rocks at the riverbank to look for bugs.

Earthworms can do too, but I prefer bugs. I always feel that the latter's easier to get the fish to bite.

(Ah, speaking of which, I think Rin hates looking for bugs.)

“Now what do we use for bait?”

“Hm? This.”

“GYAH!!?”

“What? You’re noisy.”

“That-that’s not a bu-bug-bug!”

“Oh?”

“Un-unbelievable…Japanese are really a little weird somewhere…”

“Don’t people from China deep fry centipedes?”

“THAT’S ONLY A SMALL GROUP! WHO’LL EAT SUCH THINGS!?”

“Really?”

“Yeah!”

"Eh? But don't the Chinese eat anything with legs other than chairs?"

"WHAT!?"

"Ah, sorry. Can tables be eaten too?"

"—"

I got hit, and by the fist too. The Chinese are really scary.

(But she often comes fishing even though she hates bugs. Hm, I miss those times.)

I recalled those things while looking for bait. Soon after, I managed to collect quite a lot.

"Alright, then let's get started."

I started to climb up the rock beside me, went past several more, and got onto the largest one.

I thread the hook through the bait, and throw it to the water. After this, I just need to wait patiently.

(Haa—so peaceful.)

Fishing is good.

I let myself merge into the silence of the hill alone, away from the buzz.

In this peaceful time, my soul's comforted by the sounds of wind and water, and I enjoy the blank in my thoughts.

This is fishing to me. It's important to catch fish, and to be honest, I did think of it this way when I was in primary school, but my attitude to fishing changed recently.

(Speaking of which, yeah…even though I can't say it, I definitely mustn't…)

"IS Academy certainly is noisy…"

…

It's fine, no one heard what I said just now.

"Heh? You can't get used to the chattering of teenage girls?"

—WHAT THE!?

“A-ah-arre!? Hikaruno-san!? Why are you here!?”

“Well, I don’t have anything to do for the time being as my specialty is IS software. Ha.”

Hikaruno-san jumped up onto the rock like a bunny, and arrived beside me.

On a side note, I would look away whenever I see those ginormous breasts bounce midway while we’re facing each other.

“Ah, give me some bait.”

“Pl-please have some. Just bugs though.”

“It’s fine, bugs are the best bait, but it’s best if you prepare some grass or fruits if you want to give them to a girl.”

Hikaruno-san said as she received the bug bait from me, and poked the hook through it.

(Is that so? If I had done so right from the beginning, I wouldn’t have received the beating from Rin. So that’s how it is.)

On a side note, Hikaruno-san’s holding a bamboo rod just like me, and the lengths are similar. We sit side by side as we let the angling lines drop.

“Speaking of which, Orimura Ichika-kun, how much do you know about IS software?”

“Eh? Well, I heard that the settings vary based on the core unlimited circuit will gather and evolve on its own, and that they also have congenital tendencies and preferences beforehand.”

“Yes yes, that’s certainly a unique answer. Let me say too that this unlimited circuit is a special privilege used when connected to the core network. If it’s used in an ordinary network, you can hack the computer easily.”

“I see.”

“Then, here comes the question. What is the core network?””

“Well…it was originally a computer world meant to connect all the ISes through an interstellar communication protocol when ISes are planned to move in space.

“Hm, that’s about it nya. Haven’t you learned quite a lot? Well, it’ll be better if you’re a little more aware of other things.”

“Why…”

“On a side note, this core network can allow for exchanges of messages or data backup, you know?”

“Eh?”

“Oh my, you don’t know? For example, your ‘ Byakushiki’ inherits data of Orimura Chifuyu personal ‘ Kurezakura’ one-off ability, and the unique functions of the first Infinite Stratos, the ‘White Knight’.”

“…”

Hikaruno-san glances at me, showing that bewitching smile again.

But the smile I can see now is a little different from before.

Right, it felt like a wild beast licking its lips in front of its prey.

"Oh, Orimura Ichika-kun, your fishing rod got a bite."

"Ah!"

I hurriedly pull up a rod.

A fat liver fish jumped out from the water, and it might be the largest one for the day.

"Beautiful."

"Th-thanks."

I've been waiting for a while, but the achievement of catching a fish still can't increase my appetite.

After that, I put the fish I reeled into the basket, put another bait on my hook, and throw it back into the water surface.

"But I do like to readjust those picky ISes."

"Adjust?"

"Yeah, like convincing those ISes that hate shooting weapons, train them with those weapons for example. This is adjusting."

It’s like training a horse. Hikaruno-san quipped and pulled her line.

“Ah—got away.”

“A big fish?”

“No, most likely just a small fry.”

Hikaruno-san sighs as she puts on the bait again. Leaving aside the size of the escaped fish, her bust measurements are comparable to Yamada-sensei’s level.

“Gulp…”

(—Haa!? This isn’t good!)

I hurriedly looked away.

“Fufufu.”

I could hear Hikaruno-san’s cheerful giggle from beside me.

“Haa, I feel lethargic for some reason.”

Rin cups her hands behind her head against the corridor wall and drinks a packet juice dangling in the air , supported by a straw, looking nonchalant.

“Fufu, is it because Ichika isn’t around?”

Charlotte, who’s walking beside her, said this, and Rin nearly dropped her juice packet in shock.

“Wh-what!? Tha-that’s not it! Humph! It’s fine for that kind of guy to not be around!”

“Yes sure.”

On a side note, they were paired up together because they had a common subject before this, and they were on the way back after compiling their lesson data.

It truly was Rin’s style to buy juice immediately after class.

“But it’s really troublesome not to be able to use IS now. It’s in personal lock mode for the time being; it won’t be stolen, and it’s useless even if it’s stolen.”

Rin said this as she looked at the ‘Shenlong’ on her wrist.

Its original form was that of a ring bracelet, but in a personal lock mode, it would stick on the arm while being less than 1mm thick, and would look like some trendy sticker on first glance.

“The problem is that this mode is going to be slow when the user needs to use it for emergency protection.”

“Well, it can’t be helped. It’s like disassembling a gun. ”

“Hm, well, we went through quite some training too, so it’s not like we’ll be dealt with easily. Also, we can still summon them when we need to, just that it’ll take some time.”

“Yeah, but because of this, all personalized IS users have to move in more than twos.”

“The only one on her own in the academy is the second year Tatenashi-san, right?”

“Yeah, and also Ichika. I think he’s probably fine.”

"…Really, hurry up and come back."

Rin inadvertently muttered, "Ah", and covered her mouth again.

But Charlotte heard her clearly, and giggled as she looked back.

"I-it-it's not that! I'm just, well, that guy never went through military training, so…!"

"Right right, you're worried, aren't you?"

"N-no—"

Rin stammered harder, and the lights on the corridor suddenly went out.

The corridors, classrooms, and electronic bulletins were all switched off at that moment.

Of course, it was not pitch dark as it was daytime—the moment Rin thought of this.

"The defense shutter!? Eh!? Why is it sliding down!?"

The defense wall slid down diagonally, protecting the glass windows.

Amidst the buzz full of screams of shock, all the walls were sealed up, and the interior of the building was so dark the fingers could not be seen.

“…2 seconds. Hey, Charlotte.”

“Hm, I know. There’s no switch to the emergency power, and the response lights aren’t lit. There’s a catch.”

They activate their IS low energy mode and summon the display window to their eyes. They also switch their sights to night vision mode, activate their sonars, heat sensors, motion sensors, sonar to sight radar.

“This is Laura. Are you alright, Charlotte?”

“Rin-san, where are you now?”

Both Charlotte and Rin received the messages on the IS private channels from Laura and Cecilia respectively.

Just when they were about to answer, they were interrupted by an intercept channel.

"All personalized suit users are to gather at the underground command room. I'm sending a map over. If there are walls getting in your way, feel free to destroy them."

It was Chifuyu's calm yet forceful voice.

These words clearly indicated that something was going to happen in this IS Academy again.

Chapter 2: The Name of the Strongest Champion in the World - Brunhilde

“Then, let me explain the situation.”

They were in the operations room in the IS Academy underground special zone.

Normally, this was not a place any student would know of, but at this point, all the personal unit pilots in the Academy were gathered.

Houki, Cecilia, Rin, Charlotte, Laura, Kanzashi and Tatenashi were lined up, with Chifuyu and Yamada standing in front of them.

This operation room seemed to run on a completely independent power supply, and the display clearly showed all information. However, it was not a hologram, but an old-styled display.

“But to think that there’s such an area…”

“Yeah, it surprises me a little…”

Rin and Cecilia looked around the room and whispered amongst themselves, only to be warned by Chifuyu immediately.

“Be quiet, Huang, Alcott! We’re in the middle of a briefing!”

“Ye-yes!”

“So-sorry!”

After Chifuyu growled at them, Rin and Cecilia stopped their whispering.

Then, Maya enlarged the shown data and started to explain to all that were present.

“Right now, all the systems in IS Academy are shut down. This is an electronic attack from some unknown source…in other words, we can conclude that we’re attacked by a hacker.”

Maya’s voice sounded more rigid than usual. It seemed that it was a rather urgent situation to have students enter this special zone.

“There’s still no student hurt up till now, and there’s no endangering of lives even as the defensive walls are in the way. Not all of the defensive walls went down, so it seems only a portion of them were activated.”

So you can go to the toilet, you know? She said, but nobody laughed.

“Er-erm, do you have any questions about the current situation?”

“Yes.”

Laura raised her hand. Like usual, an active soldier would be very active when something came up.

“I heard that IS Academy runs on an independent system. Is it really possible to be hacked into under such situations?”

“A-about that…”

Maya seemed to be really troubled, and she turned aside. Chifuyu seemed to understand what she meant, and spoke up, saying, “This isn’t the issue. The issue is who’s attacking us now.”

“And what’s the enemy’s objective?”

“There’s no need for so much work if we knew.”

That’s true. Laura said, and finished her question.

Nobody else raised their hands, and Maya turned to explain the content of the operation.

“Then, Shinonono-san, Alcott-san, Huang-san, Dunois-san, Bodewig-san, please head to the access room and carry out a computer dive through the IS core network. Sarashiki Kanzashi-san, please act as backup.”

Maya declared eloquently, but there was a silent response from the personal IS users.

“…”

“Eh? What is it, everyone?”

Besides Tatenashi, all of them looked confounded as they stood in front of Maya.

“““Computer dive!?”””

“Yes. You do know there’s such a possibility in theory, right? The IS pilots can dive into the computer world as a virtual visualization through the bypass protecting the neural system…this method however is not just theoretical. In fact, we’re restricted by the additional clauses of the Alaska treaty, but because we have fulfilled 4 case criteria for this situation, we’re allowed to use it.”

“Th-that isn’t what I’m trying to ask!”

Rin swung her fists as she flailed them around.

“Yes! As for computer dive, are we, well…”

Cecilia said in a troubled manner, and Charlotte continued off from her words,

“We’re going to use the IS coherence function and nanomachine signals to upload a personal consciousness and enter the computer world like this—”

“This itself doesn’t possess any risks, but there’s probably no benefit. No matter what kind of computer it is, recalibrating the software, hardware or both will be faster than diving into the IS computer world itself.”

After Laura’s explanation, Kanzashi adds on,

“And also…the pilot’s defenseless when diving into the computer world…it’ll be troubling if something happens…”

In the end, Houki expressed her view in place of everyone.

“Also, it’s still too dangerous to gather all the personal pilot users at the same place.”

Upon hearing all these suggestions, Chifuyu concluded decisively.

“No, this operation requires us to repel the hackers through a computer dive, and I won’t listen to any disagreements. If anyone’s not willing, they can back out. ”

All of them were overwhelmed by her pressure.

“No, that’s not it. It’s not that I’m unwilling…”

“Just, a little surprised…”

“Ca-can you do it, Laura?”

“Ah, yes, that’s right.”

“I’ll try my best…”

“I-I’ll do it. Just let me succeed in this mission.”

Upon hearing all their agreement, Chifuyu clapped her hands.

“Right, then head to the access room to carry out the computer dive! Begin the operation!”

Houki and company accepted this command and left the operations room.

The ones left behind were Chifuyu, Maya and Tatenashi.

“We have another mission for you.”

“Please tell me.”

Tatenashi was showing no signs of her usual folly attitude as she silently nodded.

“I guess another force will attack the Academy while the system’s down.”

“An enemy—is it?”

There would certainly be another country using this chaos to invade, and Chifuyu had already seen through this.

“Right, they can’t battle now. Sorry for asking you again.”

“Leave it to me.”

“You’ll be in a tough defensive battle.”

“Don’t worry. Even if it’s like this, I’m still the student council president.”

She said and showed a fearless smile, but Chifuyu’s expression did not change at all.

"But your IS took quite some damage during that incident a few days ago. It's probably not completely recovered yet."

"Yes, but I'm Sarashiki Tatenashi. In this situation, I know how to fight."

As the leader amongst the students, she would not take even a step back.

Chifuyu saw the strong determination deep inside her eyes, and sighed.

She then looked straight at Tatenashi and said,

"I'll leave it to you then."

Tatenashi bowed and excused herself as she walked out of the operations room.

Chifuyu and Maya witnessed her leave, and spoke with heavy hearts.

"What exactly are we doing…we're making the students we're supposed to protect fight…"

"Orimura-sensei…"

She did not say ‘it can’t be helped’. This was something she could not say.

No matter what reason it was, the act of making students…children stand on the battlefield was unforgivable.

Whether it was to Chifuyu or Maya, there were limits they could not back away from.

“Alright, now’s not the time to stand around foolishly. We still have our own jobs.”

“Yes!”

Chifuyu and Maya proceeded to prepare for something.

“…”

With a click, the belts on the boots tightened.

Chifuyu was dressed in a black ninja-like body suit, and she lifted her head.

She was looking at the 6 blades called katanas, refined from the sharp physical sabers used by IS, and they were leaning on the wall in a sheathed state.

She inserted them into the holster on her thighs, and became an abnormally shaped samurai.

“It’s been a while since I tied my hair like this.”

She said as she bundled her hair tightly.

Chifuyu, with her hair tied into a ponytail, wielded an IS blade with two hands.

“—Let’s go.”

Click. The door opened.

Chifuyu walked into the darkness, and only the emergency lights under her feet showed her profile.

The reflected face of Chifuyu shown on the blade ostensibly showed a smile.

“Alright, now then.”

Tatenashi pulled outside from the destroyed defense wall, and landed on the floor gently.

“The students have all evacuated. In that case, it’s fine, I guess.”

Pak. She opened the fan, and there were the words ‘ welcome guests’ written on it.

She was not welcoming them with a smile, but with a metal fist.

“Intruder alert, intruder alert.”

Tatenashi’s cellphone started to beep loudly.

She took the phone up, and looked at the screen. There was a camera independent of the school's system…in other words, it was a shot of the enemy she took on her own.

These were 6 'hairy creatures' with wilted leaves-like objects stuck onto them, and it was impossible to distinguish the gender.

On first glance, one might think they were forest camouflage clothing, but they were actually completely different.

"I remember that thing is the newest optical hologram that takes a snapshot of the surroundings and shows it to the surface."

The things that looked like wilted leaves were actually unique moveable membranes; normally, they would take the appearance of leaves, but once the camouflage activates, they would cover the wearer piece by piece, and display the surrounding scenery on it, creating a camouflage effect.

(Speaking of which, we have special ops with such newest equipment enter the Academy soon after the system died, huh? It certainly feels weird.)

But they were probably a different group from the ones who deactivated the system. If they were, it would be most efficient for them to barge in right at the moment when the system went down.

(Well, this proves that we're being watched all the time. How unappealing.)

This is IS Academy, an all-girls school with girls in bloom, and there's a 24 hour surveillance on this place? The adults really lack the romantic mood—Tatenashi thought.

"Oh my?"

This was a long straight corridor, nothing could be seen, and there were no sounds of footsteps, but there was something.

"Well, I didn't think I'll reach it so soon. I guess I'm a woman who's beloved by fate and causality."

Pushhhh, pussshhh.

Unique metallic bullets flew at Tatenashi with a short burst of sounds.

But those bullets stopped right in front of her.

“!?”

“Fufu, just kidding. This is ‘Active Inertia Canceller’.”

In fact, she had already scattered the aqua nanomachines of her IS, the “Mysterious Lady” into the air. While IS shooting weapons were a different case, she could still easily block ordinary soldier shots.

She bared a smile at the faltering expressions of the enemies she could not see.

Also, the nanomachines were the ones who searched out these invisible enemies. Even if they had no voices or visible appearance, she could easily find them with the sensing particles as they were still touching the air. Also —

“Poof.”

Tatenashi clicked her thumb.

In an instant, a large explosion engulfed the corridor.

“This is one of the Mysterious Lady specialty, the “ Clear Passion”. How does it feel?”

In any case, indoor battles were what the ”Mysterious Lady” was best at. In ordinary situations, she could control the nanomachines fluidly, whether it was the density, or the currents.”

Though the enemy was a special force with the latest equipment, they were ordinary people, and they were certainly no match for an IS that was not even completely activated.

“It feels like I’m bullying the weak here.”

Haa…Tatenashi let out a sigh…however,

“Ufufu, I really love doing such things.”

The demonic woman grinned away.

Normally, the side of justice would be on Tatenashi’s side, especially as the enemy invaded into a girls school with most of its students unarmed.

“Alright, it’s coming. Here’s my special move, Tatenashi Five!”

Once she said that, her silhouette split into 5.

There were 5 Sarashiki Tatenashis in uniform, wielding lances as they stood in a row.

“Well, this is the Mysterious Lady’s ability.”

In other words, some of the 5 were illusions created through nanomachine lens, while the rest were water figures created by the aqua nanomachines.

The problem would be to look for the real one.

And as for the water figures—

“BAM!”

They were physical bodies with explosive functions. Since they were created by water, bullets were ineffective against them.

“Le-leader! If this keeps up—”

“UWAAHHH!!!”

The trained soldiers, highly trained men, were beaten one after another.

The 6 people who showed up on the lens before this met up, but were still no threat to Tatenashi at all.

“Fa-fall back! FALL BACK—!"

She was merely 16 years old, and her machine and physical state were not good.

But she still created this devastation single-handedly.

It was a painful reminder of how the existence called IS destroyed all understanding.

“Ufufufu♪”

Tatenashi chuckled in the midst of the flames, showing the image of a complete villain.

"…"

A woman heard the explosion that rang far above her, and moved forward in this pitch-black passage.

The one invading this IS Academy underground special zone was the leader of the American Special Ops unit, 'Unnamed'. She was wearing the stealth energy test model of the IS 'Fang Quake'.

There were slight variances in the details of the designs as compared to Iris' high-speed assault spec combat unit.

First, there was a difference in the paint job. Unlike the very easy identifiable tiger stripes of Iris' unit, it was completely painted in navy blue, used by the SEALS team; it had no decorations at all, and did not have any pictures or squad emblem.

This was to be expected. The ‘Unnamed’ squad comprised of members that had no nationality, race, religion or even name, truly ‘unnamed’. There were no records or files indicating they belonged to the American army. Such a squad couldn’t possibly have an emblem.

This woman too was also without name, and the squad simply called her ‘leader’ for convenience.

She once had a name, a name she long forgotten from the cruel training. At this point, she was nobody, just a nameless leader of a nameless squad. That was the woman’s entirety.

“…”

The leader proceeded on.

Her target was the unregistered core that was taken by IS Academy a few days ago.

If she could do that, anyone could simply add the number of IS.

—But completely unmanned units.

To America, that had a bigger bearing than the number of IS. Right, a certain plan could be completed if it was obtained.

(I heard that once the 'plan' is complete, the world's map can be redrawn, but—)

She did not know the contents of the plan, and had no interest in it. As the leader, she was solely focused on the mission.

"…?"

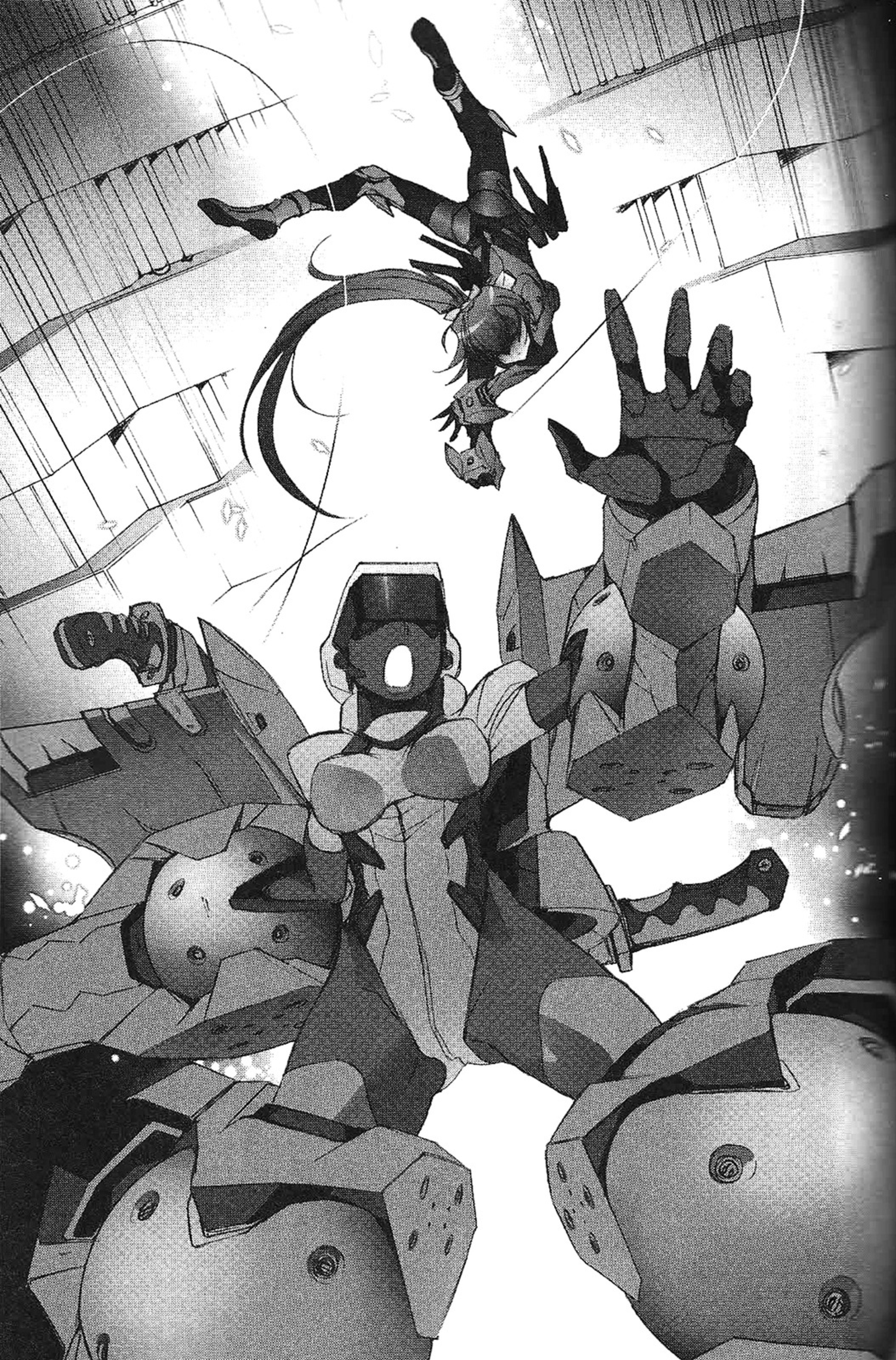
She used the hovers of the Fang Quake to stop her advance. Her sensors clearly picked up a person's presence in front of her, on this pitch black corridor.

"It's coming."

"—!?"

Suddenly, a gust blew by with this short line.

BAM! A spark came with a huge boom, and a shadow leapt behind the leader.



And the next moment, all the lights on the corridor were lit.

“World’s Strongest Brunhilde …”

The leader inadvertently muttered.

A woman stood on the lit corridor confidently .

It was Chifuyu, dressed completely in black, and there were 3 sheathed katanas on the side of her thighs…6 in total.

She was also wielding swords on both hands, and it seemed that those were the two swords that were swung at the Fang Quake armor.

(Is she serious…?)

This was the first thing the leader thought of.

She used the IS sensor to check many times, and found that Chifuyu was only equipped with a body suit. This body suit resembled a diving suit, and it covered her body; she was wearing sturdy boots that were enhanced, combat gloves on her hands, and only her face was exposed. But even so—

(She’s wearing a suit that’s suited for going against ordinary weapons…what does she exactly plan to do?)

Of course, there should be some bulletproof or bladeproof functions, but even so, she was no different from being stark naked in front of the IS’ overwhelming firepower.

“What is it?”

“…”

“Bring it on. You’re standing in front of the first generation Brunhilde, the first woman to attain the title of strongest, so just focus entirely on fighting me, ordinary soldier.”

Chiufyu showed a smirk, and her face showed the relaxed mood of an overwhelmingly powerful person.

“This is…?”

Houki, Cecilia, Rin, Charlotte, Laura, Kanzashi followed the instructions, and finally arrived at the access room.

The room was completely white, and every corner was sparkling.

Inside the room were six bed chairs, 3 on the left, and 3 on the right, pure white like the room, and looked just like a salon.

“Everyone, sit on the chairs and relax…I’m going to that desk as backup.”

With Kanzashi prompting them, the rest laid down on the bench seats on both sides.

“B-but, what’s with this room? It’s no different from a movie world.”

“Yeah, this is the first time I’m seeing such facilities. What about you, Rin-san?”

"Hm—I suppose China doesn't have facilities like this. Speaking of which, what's with this underground special zone? It seems weird to me no matter how I think about it."

"It certainly does feel a little abnormal. The operation room just now had a really durable structure."

"Eh, what is it, Charlotte? You used the IS to scan?"

"Yes, just a little."

Keep this a secret, please? Charlotte placed her index finger in front of her lips.

"Germany doesn't have such facilities either. What exactly is this Academy? Is it really an ordinary High School?"

Upon hearing the words Laura said, everyone went silent.

That was the possibility they could vaguely realize.

"There are really too many secrets regarding IS Academy."

Even if nobody said it clearly, that was certainly the thought of everyone present.

“Now, we have to work on rebooting the system…”

Kanzashi declared while pretending to be calm, and the rest nodded in agreement as they linked the IS with the port of the bed chair.

“Then, to connect all your IS with the core network… please switch to software priority mode…”

She immediately activated her IS, ‘Uchigane Nishiki’, called out her console, and placed the keyword in front of her in a fluid manner.

“Ah.”

Suddenly, Charlotte let out a call,

“I just thought of it. I read about a book about people diving into a game world[8]. Is it that kind of feeling?”

Upon seeing Charlotte being excited for no apparent reason, the other members were all stunned.

Kanzashi coughed dryly, and answered,

“There’ll be a virtual reality world formed inside…I’ll act as backup here from now on, so please get ready to reactivate the system core…navigate begin.”

“Understood.”

Rin answered energetically.

And then, all of them laid down on the bed chairs and gathered their consciousness.

“Launching…!”

Kanzashi connected system—and at that moment, the 5 girls’ consciousness were ostensibly absorbed by some mysterious falling suction feeling.

“This is…”

Cecilia was the first one to speak up.

A grassland could be seen around them, and the early summer sunlight shone as a comfy cool breeze blew past.

Zaaa…in the midst of this scenery as the flowers and grass sang, Rin suddenly yelled,

“KYAH—! Wha-what is this!?”

She said as she grabbed at her own clothing.

It was a blue dress with a white apron, just like Alice’s dress-up in ‘Alice in Wonderland’.

The rest were shocked by Rin’s voice, and they looked at their own and each other’s clothing.

“Th-this is…”

“Everyone’s…”

“Dressed in the same way too…?”

Just as they were surprised, a window suddenly appeared in the sky.

“This is Kanzashi…how’s your situation…?”

“We-well…it feels like we entered some fairy tale world or so…”

Upon hearing Charlotte’s answer, Kanzashi pondered slightly for a while, and answered,

“This is…

They could hear the sound of the keyboard being tapped at.

“I understand. Right now, this computer world is being hacked…in this case, everyone…has to play…your given role.”

“Role!?”

Rin spoke up for the rest as she exclaimed loudly,

“Eh, what does that mean? Do we have to be Alice?”

“I don’t know…this space is too unstable…so.”

“Erm, speaking of Alice…”

Charlotte glanced aside at Laura.

“What is it?”

“No, I’m just thinking that you’re a bunny after all.”

“Humph. Don’t lump me together with a weak existence like bunny. I’m a proud black hare—”

“Ahh!”

Suddenly, Cecilia creaked.

“Seriously, let’s hurry.”

Tatetatetate…

A white rabbit dressed in a gentleman’s suit was looking at his watch as he walked straight at them with his legs straightened.

“I-it appeared!”

“Catch him!”

Upon hearing Kanzashi’s voice, all of them nodded in unison.

“Hold it—! …Ahh, seriously, this dress makes it troublesome to run around!”

“Rin, at such a moment, you must raise up both sides and run like this—”

“Hm, I’m going then.”

“Not good, he’s headed for the forest!”

Cecilia pointed, and that white bunny vanished into the forest without looking back.

The 5 of them entered the lush forest to pursue after him.

They passed through the path with leaves covering them from above, and the area in front of them suddenly brightened as they arrived at an open place where the sky could be seen.

“Eh, what is this?”

There were 5 doors in the forest.

“Are we to go in?”

“Maybe…”

Tatenashi nodded unconfidently. On a closer look, one would notice that there was some static noise on the window image.

"In front of us…I guess the signal will be cut…so you have to head to the system core on your own…"

""""Understood.""""

The 5 of them nodded at each other, and each of them opened a door and entered separately.

"Nn…"

Rin confirmed that the sharp glaring light in front of her eyes had subsided, and opened them slowly.

She had a vague feeling after passing through the door , and was surrounded by the light just like that.

"What exactly, is this…"

She turned her head and looked around.

…Huh? Rin had a question mark floating over her head.

"This is, maybe…"

This was a place she saw before somewhere, and she had experienced the atmosphere here before.

That was the classroom she and Ichika were in during Middle School.

The orange light shone in through the window, and she could hear the sounds from the baseball club afar.

“Why, the Middle School…?”

She spaced out for a while, and then realized her clothes had changed.

“This is, the sailor uniform I wore in Middle School…”

That was a black-like deep blue sailor uniform. She felt that this uniform was too plain, and did not like it back when she was in school, but at this point, she felt nostalgic.

“…”

Anyway, she started to walk around the classroom.

Real.

It felt completely real.

The temperature, humidity, and even the subtle atmosphere was replicated flawlessly.

But it was not reality.

She tried summoning her IS, but she could not find her standby-mode bracelet for some reason.

“…I guess this is a trap.”

Having understood this, she had to leave immediately.

Rin walked towards the classroom door.

—KARAK

“Eh?”

Someone on the other side of the door opened it a second faster.

“Yo, Rin.”

“I-I-Ichika?”

Standing over there was Ichika, dressed in his uniform
.

"…"

GINK!

It was the umpteenth hit as Chifuyu landed another blade strike on the 'Fang Quake' armor.

But there was nary a scratch.

And there were 4 chipped blades.

"Hm…"

She threw the wrecked blades onto the floor, and drew new katanas again from her thigh sheaths.

A clear unsheathing sound could be heard on this battlefield filled with killing intent.

"…Please stop here."

The ‘leader’ spoke up, probably feeling annoyed by this.

Her voice remained as calm as before, but there was a sense of impatience in her tone.

“Hm?”

What do you mean? Chifuyu showed this intent as she taunted,

“I say, you American Special Ops really have nothing to do than to come all the way to a school in this Far East Island country.”

“…”

“You want the unmanned unit’s wreckage—and not just that, I suppose? But unfortunately, the ‘Byakushiki’ was moved somewhere else.”

Chifuyu curled her lips and gave a smirk.

The ‘leader’ gritted her teeth slightly.

“Since you know that…why?”

“Humph, ‘flesh and blood can’t possibly be a match against an IS’, is it?”

Swoosh, swoosh, she swung the katanas on both sides and got into position.

“—That’s if I were an ordinary person.”

At that moment, Chifuyu leapt forward and quickly swung at the Fang Quake, but this time, the ‘leader’ finally caught Chifuyu’s blade with her right hand.

“It’s useless…!”

“I should be the one deciding if it’s useless or not.”

Chifuyu let go of her katanas, and wrapped her arms onto the enemy’s body like a snake.

Her movements were as fluid as flowing water, and she lifted the ‘leader’ up. She was holding a wire in her hand.

“Gak…!?”

The ‘leader’ could not help but squeal as she was choked by the neck.

“You relied too much on the Absolute Defense System, so your judgment’s dulled.”

The next moment, the wire was about to be burned through by the Absolute Defense’s energy shield, but Chifuyu had already positioned herself, and spun around to kick at the ‘leader’.

The heavy IS armor, together with the weight of a person, was flying to the wall, but Chifuyu’s face remained as calm as ever.

On the other hand, the ‘leader’ felt troubled.

(Such terrifying physical attributes, but…)

So what?

(Either way, this level of attack won’t cause any damage to the IS.)

It’s because she understood this that she felt inexplicable.

(What’s the meaning of these actions? This person—)

Chifuyu however did not give her the chance to think this, and her katanas came attacking.

“What is it? Show more of your abilities, American.”

“…You’re really annoying, Japanese.”

The sparks of battle scattered again.

“Then, let’s collect the data from ‘Byakushiki’. Once you activate it, step on this scanner.”

“Right.”

I nodded my head, and followed Hikaruno-san’s instructions.

The light ring completely covers the IS from top to bottom, and collects all sorts of data from it.

“Show me the hardware too. Open cable gate number 4.”

“Ah, yes.”

After having gone through adjustments with Kanzashi and the rest, I did learn a little of such things.

I followed the instructions and opened the terminal.

“Okay, okay, let’s try it!”

Kachk, she inserted the cable.

BUZZ—!

“…!!”

“Hm, what is it?”

“No, it feels…like there was an electric surge flowing through me.”

“Hm—? That’s weird. Hold on and let me check for a while.”

Just when I was wondering what was going on, a voice suddenly rang in my mind.

"…Ichika…"

"Eh?"

"Hm?"

Hikaruno-san and I were startled.

"Erm, was the private channel open?"

"No, it's not? The settings in limited mode."

"That's weird…"

It certainly feels like it was the private channel…I think.

"Let's not talk about this. I'm going to adjust the output rate and increase the thrusters by 5%."

"Right."

Anyway, let's focus on collecting the data.

I thought as I brought my consciousness back.

"…!"

GAGINK! With a heavy sound, Chifuyu's last katana broke.

"It's over."

The 'leader' was agile in her movements.

She swung a fast left punch into Chifuyu's abdomen.

—At that moment, BAM! A breaking sound rang, and Chifuyu was sent flying.

"That was…"

The 'leader' had suspicions over this feedback, and looked at her left hand.

She could see the scar of a firearm burned through it.

(Not good—)

She finally realized.

She pulled her distance from Chifuyu; the enemy had avoided damage through her reactive armor, and she had blades around her.

And then, Chifuyu clearly declared.

"'Shatter'."

This verb triggered the metals, and at the next moment , all the blades let out huge explosions.

"!!!"

The walls, floor, ceiling were all engulfed by the explosions, a scene of thorough massacre.

Chifuyu ran on the corridor before the flames caught up to her.

"Don't you run away…ah!"

The 'leader' was trying her best to remain calm, but she couldn't help but show her anxious emotions for being unable to catch Chifuyu.

She lit her thrusters and immediately flew out.

She wanted to deliver a crushing blow to the escaping Chifuyu from behind—but the latter seemed to have eyes on her back as she easily did a somersault to dodge the fist.

“Humph.”

GAK. She kicked at the face of the ‘leader’, and used the recoil to turn on the corridor.

(According to the sonar sensors, that room is a dead end. I caught you!)

The ‘leader’ thought as she accelerated the boost to the maximum.

“Heh!”

She kicked down the door.

But the moment she entered, BAM! The lights were switched on.

“It’s your turn, Maya.”

“Understood!”

Chifuyu pulled the stealth mantle off, and appearing under it was the Rafale Revive equipped with 4 large Gatling guns.

(Ku, the ‘Quad Phalanx’!)

This ‘turret’ could not move at all due to its weight and recoil control needed, but had the most powerful attack as it stood there.

By the time she realized this bad situation, it was too late.

BARARARARARARARARARA!!

The rain of cannons poured down on her.

Glak glak glak, the bullets sounded like a slot wheel giving away money due to jackpot. Chifuyu merely glanced aside at this scene and drank the coffee on the table.

“…Yes, your coffee’s really the best here, Yamada-sensei.”

"Actually, that's instant coffee."

"…"

A minute later, the thoroughly battered 'leader' was suppressed by Maya and Chifuyu.

Chifuyu merely finished that coffee that had a slight bloody taste on it.

"Right, that's all then."

Tatenashi tied up the men of the Special Ops team with the unique fiber rope, and heaved a sigh.

(They're undoubtedly Americans, and I guess they came from the unmanned model number 371)

But inexplicably, the Academy's system went down.

If this were to keep up for too long, she would have to shatter all the shutters of the classrooms to let the outside air flow in.

(Hm, having the student council president do this herself is a little too…)

But well, hesitation was not going to solve things.

“Let’s go.”

She reverted her IS back to standby mode so as to save energy.

She took a step forward.

And at that moment, a silencer bullet passed through her abdomen.

“Eh?”

Blood oozed out.

And just like that, Tatenashi tumbled forward without warning.

“I finally got the chance…”

(Shoot, I was too careless!)

The men who were tied up undid their binds.

Most likely, they cut off the binds with their hidden plasma cutters, and their limbs were free.

“How do we deal with her?”

“She’s a pilot registered as Russia’s representative. She ’s a Japanese, and once she obtained her IS, used her gained autonomy to change nationalities. That’s very promiscuous.”

“Then…?”

“Stop the bleeding, carry out emergency measures, dull the pilot’s senses using morphine, and bring her back with the IS.”

“Understood.”

Upon hearing the leader’s instructions, the men quickly got into action.

They hurriedly stuffed something into her mouth to stop herself from committing suicide.

“Nn, ugh!”

"Don't resist. You'll bleed more."

"…"

Her abdomen was hurting, and it felt as if her bones and flesh were being dug out.

Tatenashi's neck was injected with morphine, and her consciousness gradually faded.

(Ichika…ku…n……)

She unconsciously called out this name.

And she lost consciousness immediately.

Chapter 3: The Separation and Dismantling of the Worlds - World Purge

“Ichika…?”

The sound of the baseball club activities could be heard from afar in this classroom as the sunset shone in, and Ichika and I were the only ones in here.

“What is it, Rin?”

—Eh, what is it I want to say?

“Well…”

I get the feeling I’m forgetting something here.

But I just can’t recall for some reason.

“Anyway, it’s rare for the two of us to be together.”

“Ah, yes…”

The location is the classroom at sunset, Rin dressed in a sailor uniform, and Ichika in school uniform.

(Even with tw-two of us alone like this, as expected…it's really nerve-wrecking…)

Just like they were in a relationship.

—In a relationship?

Right.

—With who?

My most beloved Ichika!

(Ye-yeah, that's right. Why did I forget such an obvious thing…?)

I laugh awkwardly and sit at my place.

My heart's beating wildly…

My heart's beating…

(I-I think…my heart's starting to hurt after all.)

"Rin."

"Wh-what is it?"

Even my voice's a little off-pitched…uu, I really embarrassed myself.

“Can I sit beside you?”

“Ah, yes.”

I subconsciously nod twice.

Ichika smiles as he sits beside me.

“…”

“…”

There's silence.

But my heart doesn't feel that way inside.

(U, uwa, uwaa, what do I do…ou-our bodies are sticking together.)

I could feel Ichika's body warmth reach me as our bodies stick to each other.

Right now, I'm so tense that I can hear my own heartbeat if I listen carefully.

“Rin.”

“Wh-what?”

Ichika whispers at my ears.

He let out a gentle breath that grazed my ear, causing my heart to beat wildly again.

“Do you want me to go to your house today?’

“Eh…”

I recall the conversation we had 3 days ago.

“My parents are going overseas tomorrow, so I have to cook for myself. It’s really troublesome.”

“Oh~”

It wasn’t really a meaningful conversation, but as I think of it now—

(Am-am I not inviting him now…)

That’s definitely the case.

Ichika must have certainly thought this way.

(~~~~~~~~~~)

My face was fully red to my ears, and I couldn’t look at Ichika in the face.

“Is it alright, Rin…?”

“…Y-yes…”

I nod my head.

“World Purge, complete.”

I feel there’s such a sound ringing in my head.

But now’s not the time for this.

(Ho-how do I change my underwear once I get home …)

My mind was full of such thoughts.

In the research room, Ichika, who had his IS in open mode, was sitting at the chair as the data collection was roughly completed.

“It’s almost over. Here’s the coffee.”

“Ah, thanks.”

Ichika drank the coffee she got from Hikaruno, and took a gulp at it.

It was bitter, and his tongue tasted the bitterness of adults.

—Ichika.

“Ah…”

He clearly heard it.

Once he firmly believed so, Ichika put down the coffee and boarded ‘Byakushiki’.

“O-oi oi, Orimura-kun!?”

“Sorry, I’m heading back to school now!”

“Hu-huh? Wait, your sister will be troubled if you do that—”

“I’m breaking through from the front!”

“NUWAH!”

Just as Ichika had declared so, he activated the particle cannon and blew up the wall in front of him.

“I’m off then.”

He flew through the hole, and immediately used the Ignition Boost to accelerate away.

Soon after, his silhouette shrank, and he could not be seen.

“How reckless…”

Ack, ack, Hikaruno muttered in the midst of the research room as dust scattered.

“But he’s still young after all.”

She sighed as she shook her head.

But she then showed a bewitching smile.

“I got the information I needed anyway, so it’s all fine, Orimura Ichika-kun.”

She grinned and casted a side glance to the sky.

“Now I can begin the *next generation mass-production plan*…”

It took me less than 30 minutes to reach IS Academy through the use of consecutive Ignition Boosts.

(Someone’s calling, calling for me…!)

Me.

In that case, I have no choice but to go,

”Because I’m Orimura Ichika.”

“!?”

The ‘Byakushiki’ sensor seem to pick up something.

“That’s…!”

The men dressed in black assault suits are carrying Tatenashi-san down the school corridors.

“Those guys—”

I carry out Ignition Boost, and focus on a single spot.

“LET GOOOOOO!!!”

While attacking them, I send the men flying and protect Tatenashi-san. And then, I fire the particle cannon at the floor to obstruct their sight.

“AAAHHHH!!!”

A kick.

This kick alone sent the 6 men flying to the wall.

“Tatenashi-san, Tatenashi-san!?”

I desperately call her name. Her body response indicates that she's not dead, but Tatenashi-san still hasn't opened her eyes.

"TATENASHI!"

I call her name with her vigor, and she finally opens her eyes.

"Nn…Ichi-ka…kun…?"

She's probably injected with some drug as she still looks a little sleepy, just like a sleeping beauty.

"Are you alright? I'll send you to the infirmary."

"No…go…underground…here. Orimura-sensei is…also there…"

I receive the coordinates and accelerate to the destination.

"Tatenashi-san, you're bleeding…were you hit!?"

"I'm fine…"

She’s still laughing away, but her face isn’t showing her usual foolishness.

(Damm! What exactly happened here!?)

I use the particle cannons to shoot down all the shutters getting in my way, and head off to where Chifuyu-nee is.

“Over here!?”

I operate the panel and open the door. Chifuyu-nee and Yamada-sensei are inside with an unfamiliar female who’s tied up.

“Huh…eh? What exactly—”

“I’ll explain later! Orimura, go save Shinonono and the rest!”

“Eh!?”

“I’ll send you the coordinates now. Hurry!”

“Ye-yes!”

I hand Tatenashi-san to Yamada-sensei, and head down with the maximum output, just as I did before.

(Seriously, what is going on!?)

I remove my IS at the target room, and enter.

Houki and the rest are sleeping in this pure white room, and a flustered Kanzashi is there.

“Ah…Ichika-kun.”

“Kanzashi? Tell me the details.”

“erm…”

It might be a little difficult for Kanzashi, who’s not adept at talking, to explain everything in such a short time.

Just when I was thinking about this, I receive a mail.

“To Orimura-kun,

Right now, this IS Academy is attacked and neutralized by an anonymous person.

Shinonono-san and the rest entered the computer world, hoping to regain control, but were attacked by someone, and we lost contact with them. If this keeps up, they may never wake up again.

Thus, we need you to enter the computer world through the IS core network just like them and save everyone.

Please.

From Sarashiki Kanzashi."

…Alright, I understand.

These are really hard to understand—I understand!

"In other words, I have to dive into the computer world!?"

"…"

Kanzashi's holding onto a taser. What is she planning to do?

"Oi, Kanza—"

BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT—[9]

“SHIIIIIIIIIIIII!!!!?”

I suddenly felt a powerful electric jolt run through my body.

It hurts.

It feels hot.

I’m numb.

My consciousness faded away.

“Wh-what are you doing!?”

I supported myself up.

—Eh?

When was I lying down? What’s with the grassland I see in front of me?

"Please head to the forest, everyone should be in a door inside."

Kanzashi's voice rang in my head.

"Roger that!"

I nod my head hard and start running.

"Wah!"

In the midst of the turbulent rain, Ichika and I use our bags as we keep running.

"Anyway, let's get to the bus stop first."

We do walk to school instead of riding the bus, but we still went to the station to hide from the rain.

"This rain sure is heavy when it pours."

"Yeah…ahh seriously, I'm completely drenched."

I squeeze the water off my hair, and suddenly feel something placed on my head.

“Use the towel.”

“Ah, yes, thanks. What about you, Ichika?”

“I’m fine.”

Ichika said this as he rubbed me on my head gently.

…Ehehe, I really love Ichika’s gentleness.

“Hey, Rin.”

“Hm? What is it?”

“Let me wipe your body.”

Ichika finished what he said, and rolls up my uniform before starting to wipe me.

“—wait, you idiot!”

THUNK! A punch of justice.

“It hurts.”

“Pervert….”

“Tahahaha…”

Recently, Ichika will touch me as long as I’m not noticing.

I-I know that he’s thirsty for me…but as expected, I prefer my first time to be a little more romantic.

“Seriously…”

But—I don’t hate it.

(My body feels like it’s floating a little whenever Ichika touches me.)

I will feel very happy.

I feel good.

I want this to continue.

…These are my true thoughts.

(To-today’s, good, I guess…?)

I ask myself.

—Tokun.

My heart throb loudly.

This is my reply.

“Ah, that’s good. The sky’s clear now.”

“Nn, that’s right.”

“Alright, then, how about coming to my house!?”

“Oh, lend me your shower.”

—Thud!

“My hair’s wet.”

“Ah, yes! Aha, ahahaha!”

I still can’t endure the throbbing in my heart, and let out a weird laugh.

“Let’s go.”

Ichika naturally holds my hand.

After a little hesitation, I grab it back and nod.

“…Un.”

And then, both of us stroll down this asphalt road that was giving off a little smell due to the rain.

The destination is my house, the Chinese restaurant ‘ Lingyin’.

I do feel a little embarrassed that my parents loved me like this.

They’re on vacation today, so the sign curtain’s not placed.

Ichika and I entered the shop and head into the main house. We then stopped at, that living room.

“Ah—uu—erm…”

Our hands are still holding each other’s.

My other open hand is opening and closing.

“Wh-what do we do? H-how about a shower first?”

"Let's do it then."

Ichika nods.

I imagine Ichika showing, and immediately blush.

(I-I better check my underwear now.)

My heart's beating like crazy.

"Rin."

"Eh!? Wha-what is it!?"

"How about we shower together?"

…

Ptch, my face is completely red to the ears.

"Pervert!"

I charge out at full speed, and escape from Ichika.

Just like this, I head upstairs and escape into my room on the second level.

"Haa, haa, haa…"

The sudden sprint just now caused my breathing to be erratic.

—How about we shower together?

“~~~~~~~~~”

Anyway, I slam my pillow onto the bed first.

“An-anyway.”

Better change my underwear.

I didn’t think of what happened before, and open my underwear drawer.

(Wh-which one do I take…? Which, that, thi-this, will this excite, him…?)

I deliberately chose my underwear for today.

This is my ‘decisive underwear’, but to be honest, these may not suit me at all.

(But I just can’t remain still like this…)

I roll up my skirt and look at my reflection.

Right now, mine are green and white stripes.

(This won’t do…)

I have no confidence in my own body.

(No! Ichika’s a pervert anyway, so it’s fine! Right! It’s fine!)

Since I’ve decided, I have to change.

I put my fingers on both sides of my panties, and slid it down.

Just when I let it down to my knees, the door opened.

“!?!?!?”

“Rin, I’m done with the shower.”

“Wha-wha-wha-what…”

My butt’s shown outside, and my panties are lowered to my knees, with Ichika standing right behind me.

“KYAAAAHHHHH!!”

Punch *slap* *slam*

—IDIOT IDIOT IDIOT IDIOT IDIOT IDIOT IDIOT IDIOT!!!

—PERVERT PERVERT PERVERT PERVERT!!!

—INDECENT INDECENT INDECENT INDECENT!!!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE!

I continued to beat Ichika up until my hands were hurting.

"Rin…"

"Eh…ah."

Ichika grab my fist, and he holds my other arm down.

He turns me over and let my back face him.

And then, he hugs me from behind.

"…"

Thump, thump, THUMP—!!

My heartbeat's getting louder to a point where it's so annoying.

It's going to break.

My heart,

My body too,

"Rin."

Ichika whispers at my eyes.

My body shuddered once, and I timidly asked.

"Wha-what is it?"

THUMP, THUMP, THUMP…!

"I want you."

—THUMP!!

"Ah, ah, ah…"

"Rin…"

Chuu, I was kissed from behind.

"Er, erm, I-II-Ichika-saa…the-there's something…hard …pressing on me here..?"

Chuu—Ichika started sucking at the place he licked.

"It was me."

He muttered with a sweet voice.

I felt my head boiling.

"Rin…to the bed."

"Ye-yes…"

Ichika, who had been cradling me from behind, now carries me with a princess carry, and I land onto the land simply like a newly-born cat.

"I'm taking it off.'"

He said as he started licking on my neck.

"Nyaa…"

My waist can't move away at all,

And my body feels like it’s going crazy with the heat.

My mind is also going blurry, thinking about nothing other than Ichika.

“Rin…your body is pretty.”

“Nn!”

…! Ichika suddenly starts licking at my collarbone.

I feel completely hot like an iron, and all the parts Ichika stroked me on were hot, so hot it was unbearable.

“Ichi, kaa…”

“I’m taking it off.”

“…”

I nod, even a little, but I really did nod.

After taking off my sailor uniform, Ichika keeps staring at my barren breasts under my bra.

“N-no…”

I want to cover my breasts in an embarrassed manner.

But Ichika uses his gentle hand to stop me.

“You’re cute, Rin.”

“Nn, fuu…”

Ichika starts to lick between my barren breasts.

This feeling feels rather hot, rather sweet, and rather lewd.

(Au…I’m…really a lewd girl…)

Because I still want this to continue.

Because I want him to be more intense with me.

“I’m going to take off the bra.”

“Ye-yes…”

Ichika prods at me with his fingers, and I lift my body slightly in an obedient manner…

…Pchin.

The sound of my bra hook being removed sounded exceptionally loud in this room…it felt that way.

My underwear slid off, but Ichika didn't remove it directly as he reach his hand further below.

—His icy cold fingers reach into my skirt that's hot and humid inside.

"Here too…"

"Wa-wait…"

"I won't wait."

Shuush…one side of my panties is dragged down.

"Ah, ahh…"

I shouldn't.

I can't do this.

…But it's not that I shouldn't.

…And there's no problem.

“Ichika…”

I let out a voice like a fawning cat, and close my eyes.

—At that moment.

“YOU BASTARD! WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO RIN!?”

Suddenly, the room door’s opened.

The one entering—

“Eh, eh, Ichika…?”

Ichika’s wearing a white school uniform I never seen before.

Never seen before…?

—No, that’s the IS Academy uniform.

(Eh, but isn’t Ichika in front of me? This should be the ideal ‘world’ that belongs to me—)

“Detecting anomaly in World Purge, foreign object intruded. Beginning elimination.”

It-it hurts! It hurts hurts hurts!

My head hurts, both inside and outside! I feel like I’m being cut! I’m dying! I’m dying of pain!

Amidst this intense pain, the Ichika dressed in the school uniform and pressing on me was sent flying by Ichika in the IS Academy uniform.

And then, the school uniform Ichika’s eyes turned from white to black, and then from black to gold.

“Executing mission, eliminating the obstacle.”

It’s a mechanical voice, and though it is Ichika’s voice, I just feel that it doesn’t sound like it.

(Wha-what is this!? What exactly is this!? What exactly is going on!?)

“Save me, Ichika!”

I cried as I yelled.

And then,

A pair of strong arms embraced me.

“It’s fine, I’m here, Rin—I’ll protect you.”

—Ahh.

Ahh.

Ahh…

(Ichika…)

This is Ichika, the real Ichika.

I know.

Not by my head.

Not by my body.

Not by my heart.

But I know by my soul.

"In this case—"

I grit my teeth to endure the pain.

"Disappear, you fake!" I open my IS 'Shenlong' fully and fire my shock cannons at their highest output.

The fake Ichika scatters like bricks, and at the same time, the entire room's destroyed.

"Rin, let's go!"

"Right!"

We ran off to the door.

And then, we're surrounded by light—

"This is…?"

"A forest…I think."

After we came out, the door disappeared into many light particles.

I saw such doors standing in the middle of the forest, and feel a little surreal.

“Ah.”

“?”

“No, Rin…you look…”

“Eh?”

I turn my head away awkwardly, and Rin looks at herself “?” with a doubtful look.

“KYAAAAHHHH!?”

Ahh, just the reaction I expected.

Speaking of Rin now, she’s in a half-naked state after being stripped by the fake me.

“I-II-Ichika!”

“Wait! It’s not my doing! Not me! That’s not me, so don’t kick me or use your shock cannons to attack me—”

“…me up.”

"Eh?"

"Dress me up!"

……

"Huh!?"

"Ah, ahh, didn't you strip me of my clothes?"

"It wasn't me!!"

"B-bu-but, after…"

Suddenly, Rin's letting out tears.

"Like that…like that…uee…"

"Ahh, no, that…"

Rin started crying.

This unexpected response cause me to be at a loss.

(But, well…)

I just can't leave her like this.

"Rin."

"Uu…uu…wha-what is it?"

"Come here, I'll help you put it on."

"Eh, ah…ye-yes…"

After that, Rin stopped crying due to her shock.

She approach me tentatively, and first reaches her hand over to give me her bra.

"…"

"…"

H-how awkward.

"Sp-speaking of which, this uniform, certainly brings back past memories!"

"Tha-that's right! It-it's really nostalgic! Aha, ahaha!"

Our pretense eases off the tension in the atmosphere.

I just can't remain calm no matter what, but I still hold onto the bra.

(I-I better not look at her body here as much as I can…)

And finally, I barely manage to help Rin put on her bra . After I button up her sailor uniform, the problematic skirt was next.

"…Ri-Rin…san? I think you better do the bottom your —"

"…"

A teary-eyed Rin looks at me .

Ahh seriously, I don't care now!

"I'm putting on your panties now."

Brrr. Rin shudders slightly.

"…"

I kneel down on one leg, trying my best not to look at her panties as I reach my hand into the skirt.

(Erm, as long as I hold the sides…)

Fuu.

“Wahh!? Wh-wha-what-what are you doing!?”

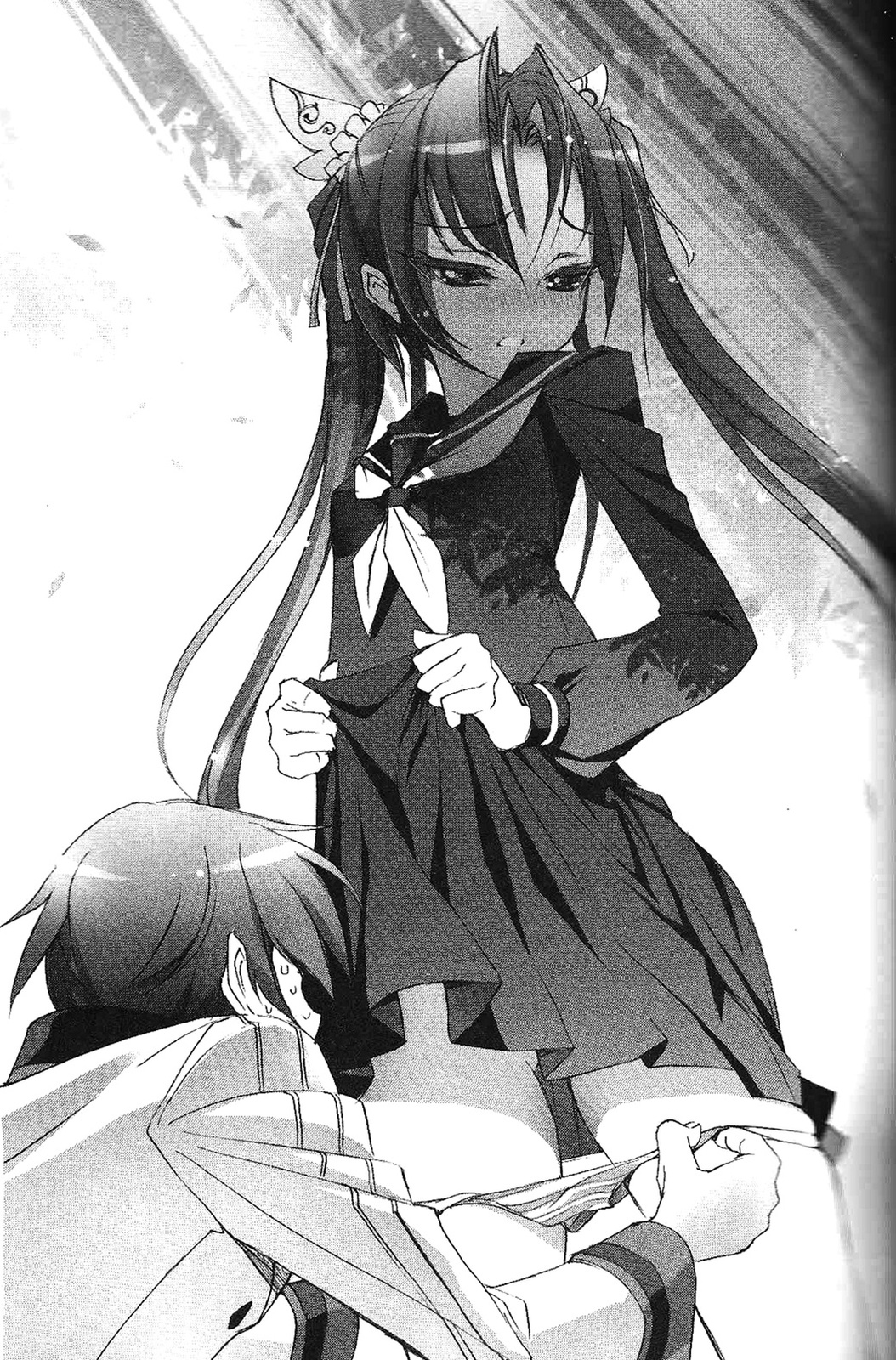
“Shut up! I can’t look when I’m doing this, and there’s no other way here!”

“Fu, Hm! Then you just need to look a little, right? Just a little!”

Rin said this as she lifted her skirt a little—and suddenly stopped.

“I-I’m letting you see because it’s you, Ichika.”

“O, oh…”



THUMP THUMP THUMP…

"…"

Rin tentatively roll her skirt up with trembling hands.

Her half-removed panties are dangling diagonally, but this really feels surreal.

"Ye-yes."

"…"

"Ho-hold it, don't be so quiet…"

"How can I talk while doing this!?"

I force myself to say this, and Rin's face immediately turns red.

"…"

Both of us are silent.

I'm already used to washing Chifuyu-nee's underwear , but this is the first time I'm touching a girl's—I mean Rin's underwear, and helping her put it on.

I can clearly feel my heart beating intensely.

(It's just Rin, It's just Rin, it's just Rin.)

Rin's…my IS Academy friend, and my second childhood friend—

"But is that all?"

I heard a certain voice—I think.

It was the voice of a girl I had never heard before.

It came clearly from the rear left side of my head.

"Rin."

"Hya, yes?"

"I-I'm done."

"O-okay…"

Rin and I inadvertently look away, and our backs are facing each other.

"…"

"…"

What's with this silence?

"Erm…"

""!?""

Kanzashi's standing in a corner of the lush forest, and we have no idea how long she has been there.

"Ka-Kanzashi…"

"A-at-at least speak up if you're there!"

"But…the atmosphere wasn't right for me to appear, so…"

""Uu…""

Kanzashi walked out from the forest.

"Anyway…I'll take Rin-san…away from here. Continuing the mission…will be difficult…"

"I-I can still continue!"

“No…there’s a high chance…we’ll be attacked by some IS. So it’s best for us to head back first…”

Rin hears Kanzashi’s calm explanation, and nods begrudgingly.

“I understand…”

“Then…Ichika will look for the rest…”

“Oh. Ah, Kanzashi, hold on for a moment.”

“…?”

“You have a leaf on your hair. You see?”

I take down the leaf I just noticed.

“Isn’t it a pity to have such beautiful hair ruined by that leaf?”

“Ah…”

Kanzashi lowers her head and fidgets about. What’s with her?

"Ahh! I really feel like using my shock cannons here!!"

Rin suddenly exclaimed loudly.

"What's with you, Rin."

"Nothing, at, all!?"

I don't understand why, but she seems infuriated. I think she's angry from deep within her heart here.

"Th-then, I'll make my move!"

"Ah, hey, wait up, Ichika!"

I can only run away now.

"You'll get it from me when you come back, Ichika!!"

I didn't head for the door, but run into the forest for the time being to escape from Rin.

"Fuu…"

My name’s Cecilia Alcott, the young CEO of the largest company in England, the Alcott Company.

I finish my work today in an office room filled with first-class furniture, and I press a special platinum bell.

DING DANG…

A delightful yet piercing sound echo throughout the room. Three seconds after that, the door opens.

“Did you call for me, CEO?”

The one entering the room is a black haired man dressed in a butler suit well suited to him.

He’s my personal butler who had been with me for a long time—Orimura Ichika-san.

I really want to show my inner excitement on my face, but I still try to show an enraged look.

“…My work today has ended.”

“Please pardon me, My Lady.”

Ichika-san bows to me politely.

But this isn’t what I want.

“Really, when both of us are alone…do you understand?”

“Haha, sorry, Cecilia.”

My childhood friend Ichika-san will pull such pranks from time to time.

But his mischievous charm is something… I like.

(That’s right, the Orimura family has been servants to the Alcott family for generations, and ever since the past, we’ve been together—)

—Together?

Together, as in…erm…

“World Purge, Initiate.”

(—Right! I’m talking about Ichika-san!)

We have a master-servant relationship, but he'll soon be my marriage partner. So when both of us are together, there's always a moment when we feel like being intimate with each other.

(…Though there are moments when I end up feel embarrassed.)

But it feels good.

It feels like both of us are separated from this world, and it feels comforting.

If this is a dream, I hope never to wake up.

I will continue to remain in slumber.

Forever, forever—

"World Purge, complete."

"?"

"What is it, Cecilia?"

"Ichika, did you say anything just now?"

"No, nothing."

"Oh, never mind then."

It's a special Thursday Night today.

We'll have a secret affair later, and I can't control the exhilaration inside me.

(I forced myself not to eat cake yesterday, so it's fine.)

While thinking about this, I suppress the anxiety inside me and head to the bathroom together with Ichika.

I walk down the stairs lit by the glamorous chandelier leading to the bathroom.

My heart's throbbing like crazy.

"I'll come back 5 minutes later."

"Okay then. What aroma do we use today?"

"Fufu, just use whatever you want."

I wink elegantly and close the door.

Inside this changing room that's filled with first-class suits, I take off my coat in a relaxed manner.

Of course, Ichika-san's the one in charge of keeping it.

(Then.)

I remove my earrings and hairband, reverting to how I was when I was born.

Then, I walk into the bathroom; the tub was completely full, ostensibly about to overflow, and welcomed me with hot steam.

(Today's the special day every week…right?)

Thump thump thump.

I turn the knob of the shower, let the hot water rain on me, and the throbbing in my chest rises.

"Cecilia, I'm coming in."

THUMP!

—Ichika’s voice came through the door.

However, I switch off the shower without haste, and answer calmly.

“Ye-yes, you can come in, you know?”

The sound of the door being opened rang.

I can hear Ichika walking in barefooted, and my face is completely red.

(Th-that’s right. Today’s the day Ichika baths me…)

Of course, I made him cover his eyes.

Ichika-san pours the aroma oil into the bathtub, and finally arrives behind me.

“I kept you waiting, Cecilia.”

“Eh, yes…”

I’m so shy that I’m unable to look behind.

(If-if Ichika-san’s not covering his eyes…)

This thought will probably cause my head to boil, and I secretly glance behind.

(H-his eyes…are covered.)

I'm relaxed, but a little disappointed too.

Like usual, Ichika-san's dressed in shirt and trousers as he stands behind me.

"I'll wash you then, Cecilia."

"Pl-please go ahead."

My somewhat excited answer cause me to be embarrassed, and the body washer covered with bubbles touch my back.

(Ahh…)

His gentle hands start wiping at my back, and I feel my mood improve.

Ichika-san will often wash from the back; then, his hands will move past my neck, and head down.

(He’s washing the back now…it feels good.)

I take pride in the refined curves of my hips.

I kept enduring the urge to eat cakes so that I can maintain this figure.

(And now for the decisive moment…)

And then, Ichika-san’s hands touch my butt.

He’s not washing me with the washer, but using his hands to scrub me with soap.

My face was all red as I enjoyed this blissful moment.

(I’m so embarrassed…but it feels so good…)

I inadvertently let out a little sigh, and Ichika-san’s muttering came at my ears.

“Cecilia, has your buttocks grown bigger?’

“EH!? Th-that can’t possibly be true, right?”

THUMP THUMP.

“But you see, the growth here is really lewd.”

Tsutsu…his fingertips are stroking my buttocks.

“Hyuun!?”

“Your underwear sizes need to change.”

“We-well, I didn’t grow fat, at all…”

“I know…you lewd Cecilia.”

He licked my ear gently.

This unexpected action cause me to fall limp on the chair.

“I-Ichika-san…”

“Cecilia, I’m going to wash the front now.”

“…”

Hold on for a moment, I nodded as I said this.

“Kanzashi, I can’t seem to open the doors.”

I’m wrestling against the remaining 4 doors standing in the midst of the forests.

For some reason, no matter how I try to push them, kick them, punch them, they won’t open.

“I think the doors are locked after what happened to Rin-san just now.”

Kanzashi’s voice sounds clearer than before, “Heh”, and I continue to think as I listen to her.

“If there are two Ichikas in those worlds, it will most likely be very dangerous.”

“Then, how do I get in?”

“Change clothes…”

“Eh?”

“You can enter if you change your outfit.”

“…”

I was stunned, and Kanzashi sent her message over with a disgruntled look.

"I'm being serious here."

"O-oh. Understood. I believe you then."

"Un."

"Then, what do I do now?"

"I'll send you a data of your change of clothes, Ichika. Please hold on for a moment."

The sound of the keyboard being tapped at can be heard over the communicator.

And then, my body's suddenly surrounded by light particles.

"Uooh!?"

"Data install…complete."

"Wait, what's this?"

I'm dressed in complete black, and I have a gas mask over my face.

I have an automatic pistol slinging off the shoulder.

"This is the mission dress for the English Special Forces SAS."

England…ah, Cecilia, huh?

"Why does it seem like a movie here?"

"…So cool…"

"What did you say?"

"Ack, ack…nothing."

Anyway, I cheer myself up and place my hand on the blue door.

Kachk, the door opened.

"I'm going."

"Be careful. There's a chance of a fake Ichika attacking. "

"It's fine. I have a weapon now."

The sound of the pistol being cocked rings, and I pat on the magazine pouch.

"Have you fired a real gun before?"

"…A man only needs to shoot once in a showdown."

"So that means no."

"…"

Fuu, I heard Kanzashi sigh, and proceed in through the door.

"You've grown here too."

"Nn…!"

My cleavage's raised from behind, and this causes me to let out a moan.

At first, he's fondling from below.

And after then, Ichika-san moves his hands around to touch them, seemingly wanting to feel all of it.

He finally starts using his fingertips to play with my nipples—

GASHANNK!

“What are $\overset{\text{me}}{\text{you}}$ doing!?”

A man dressed in Special Ops clothing breaks in through the glass window, and shoots Ichika-san.

“Ichika-san!!”

“Eradicating anomaly in World Purge…foreign object…eliminate...”

Ichika-san was shot through the head, and his head was dangling as his mouth mutter such ambiguous words.

Golong. His eyes turned to golden and black.

“Ichika…san?”

Something doesn’t seem right, but what…?

“Get away from Cecilia!”

Ichika-san’s slammed hard by the butt of the pistol, and is shot again.

(I-I-Ichika-san!?)

Black sticky liquid flows out from his wounds, and his body melts into a pile of gooey stuff.

He then finally disappeared completely into light.

“Ah, ah, ah…”

“Are you alright, Cecilia? I’ll go save you—wah!?”

I open my ‘Blue Tears’ and swing the close-ranged blade ‘Interceptor’ at the intruder.

“My Ichika-san! My! My!”

“O-Oi, wait! Stop, you idiot!”

“Idiot!? You dare say this to this England’s National Cadet Representative, Cecilia Alcott—”

Eh?

(I’m…Cecilia Alcott. England’s Cadet Representative?)

My mind’s in a complete mess.

“World Purge, forcefully interfered.”

—ZUKING!

“It hurts!”

My head hurts, and it feels like it’s going to be cut up.

“I-I-I…I’m…I’m…!”

“Cecilia!”

The intruder removes his gas mask.

That face’s Ichika-san’s.

The awesome expression, the firm voice.

That’s right, he’s the man who prevented me from falling into my dreams…

“Shoot down this fake world!”

—Right, this is my Ichika-san!

“Taking care of it!”

I fire a shot off my ‘Starlight Mk III’ at the ceiling.

The fake world disappears into smoke just like that.

“That was really too much!”

Cecilia, now dressed in uniform, has her arms folded as she looks angry.

She has been playing with her hair curls since just now , shook them away angrily, and folds her arms again.

“What is it? It’s not like anything happened.”

“Nothing happened? You say nothing happened!? I, that fake did to my body—”

Cecilia, who looks ready to attack anyone now, suddenly stops.

“I-Ichika, san? Erm, did you…enter the bathroom…?”

…Wahey!

I had been trying my best to avoid this question since just now, and she finally noticed it.

“D-di-did you…see me naked?”

“Not at all! Absolutely not!”

“Who’re you fooling…‘Blue Tears’!”

Cecilia suddenly opens her IS; her face is completely red to the ears as she points at me and exclaims,

“Come out, bits!”

“You kidding me!? Oi!”

But this can’t be some sort of joke. The 4 bits start attacking me as they let out beam shots.

“UWAAAHHHH!! I’LL DIE! I’LL DIED! I’LL REALLY DIE HERE!”

“It-it’s your fault for humiliating me!”

“IT WASN’T ME! IT WASN’T ME!”

"That goes for both Ichikas!"

"WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?"

The beam burned my butt off.

"Ce-Cecilia…!"

"I don't want to listen to you!"

"Pretty!"

"Eh…!"

Cecilia stops what she was doing, and the bits too stop.

"Well, to put it…your body's pretty, Cecilia…"

It's really embarrassing to say this.

But this definitely isn't something I'm saying against my will, and besides, if I don't say something now, I'll really be killed.

"…"

Cecilia removes her IS and fumbles around.

"If it's you alone, Ichika-san…you can look…"

"Th-that's quite the honor."

"But you say I'm the most beautiful in the world…"

No, I didn't say it to that extent…

"Seriously, Ichika-san!"

DON! Cecilia pushes me away with both hands, *tatata*, and runs out of the forest.

"Ha, haha…"

But she really is pretty.

Just like a model. Cecilia has always been like that, but now that's no doubt about it.

(I don't think ordinary models are that pretty…)

Upon thinking about it, my face turns red.

"Do you have any slight change in how you view her?"

I thought I heard someone mutter something, but it then disappeared with a breeze.

"…Ichika."

Kanzashi's message reaches me,

…But for some reason, she doesn't seem happy at all.

"What next, Kanzashi?"

"I'll send you your clothing, choose whatever you want."

Puu. The line's cute off.

"Wha-what's going on?"

I'm a little dizzy as I don't know what's going on at all.

And then, a large case full of clothing appears above my head and drops down on me.

"WHAA!?"

I dodge it at the last moment, and can't help but gulp.

"D-did, did I do anything…?"

I have no idea of it though.

Either way, there are still 3 of them left, Charl, Laura and Houki.

—Right.

"Let's do it!"

I open the clothing case.

I'm Charlotte Dunois.

Studying in IS Academy—

"World Purge, complete."

And I'm a maid of the wealthy Orimura Family.

But this situation will end a week later, and the reason is…

"Charlotte."

“Hyah!”

My butt was touched, causing me to squeal.

I nearly let drop the cleaning tool in my hands, and hurriedly embrace it in both hands.

“M-master!? You’re teasing me again—”

“What’s bad about a little teasing? Besides, it’s about time you stop calling me master.”

“Bu-but.”

The previous family owner who hired me over from the Church I grew up in died last year, and this year, my master Ichika inherited the role of family head.

Once Ichika took over as head, he immediately declared that he’ll ‘take the maid Charlotte as his wife’.

Ichika and I will have our wedding a week later, and we’ll tie the knot there.

“I-I’m still a maid…anyway.”

“Hm? Then your master’s orders are to be followed at all costs.”

“Ye-yes, of course.”

“I see.”

Upon saying this, my master Ichika suddenly flips my skirt.

“Kyaaahhh!?’ “Kyaaahhh!”

“Charlotte, you’re wearing lewd underwear today again.”

“It-it’s because you ordered me to, Master…”

I’m wearing a sexy translucent lingerie that has laces on the side.

The reason why I’m wearing this is not only to obey Master’s orders…but to show Ichika that I’m ready to be invited to spend the night with him.

“Charlotte, your face is red.”

“S-seriously, Master! I still have my job to do, please excuse me!”

I say and hope to get away from here, but Ichika embraces me from behind.

“I won’t let you run away.”

“N-no…I still have, work…”

My butt’s being patted at.

“It’s your job to accompany me too, you know?”

“Nn…I-I got it…”

My face is completely red, and I nod gently.

And then, Ichika suddenly carries me up in a bridal carry.

“I caught a cute maid♪”

“It’ll be bad if people see us here…”

“It’s fine. Everyone has agreed to our relationship, Charlotte.”

“This isn’t what I’m talking about.”

Though I say this, this fact he said cause my heart to delight, and her tense face to relax.

“Alright, let’s go to my room.”

Chuu, a kiss on the face. This is the first time I’m being obedient like a kitty ever since I was born.

(How do I resist this…)

Because I never thought about going against him.

I want to offer my body and heart to him.

To my most beloved Ichika.

To my most beloved master.

“We’re here, Charlotte.”

“Y-yes…”

I’m brought to Ichika’s bedroom, and I’m placed gently on a large bed with a canopy over it.

(T-this means, we’re…finally going to that point…!?)

THUMP THUMP THUMP.

My heart’s fluttering, and it started to hurt.

“Charlotte…”

Ichika stares at me closely, and looks like he’s going to bury me under, and I close my eyes.

“Kuu. I have a present to give to you today.”

A finger prods at my biting lips, and I realize it’s not a kiss.

(Ah…th-that’s not it…)

I feel a little relieved, but also disappointed.

Just when I feel bounded down by these complicated emotions, a white dress gently falls onto me.

“Ah, this is!”

“Yes, for the wedding.

This is the pure white wedding dress every girl look forward to.

And now, it’s on me.

“Can you try wearing it, Charlotte?”

“Ye-yes.”

I nod energetically and get off the bed with Ichika.

“…”

“…”

“Well…master.”

“What is it, Charlotte?”

“You’re standing there, so it’s…”

“You can’t change?”

“Ye-yes.”

I nod my head in response while holding onto the dress…ahh, I’m so embarrassed.

“Can I see it?”

"Eh?"

"Can I see you changing clothes, Charlotte?"

"Heh…"

"I want to see."

"B-but, that's…"

"Please."

Ichika then gives me a teasing wink.

(Ah, really, how can I refuse when you show such an expression…)

But I just say 'okay', and I give a silent response.

"Can I? Charlotte?"

"S-sure."

"Thanks."

And then, Ichika kisses me on the head as a reward.

This alone causes me to feel blissful.

(I’m so weak…)

I show a shy smile and put the wedding dress onto the bed for the time being.

And then, I stand upright while facing Ichika.

“Th-then, I’m tak—changing my clothes.”

I nearly say out ‘taking my clothes off’, and hurriedly change my words.

To put it, this is too direct.

“…”

I gulp and start to undo my apron.

I feel my heart breaking apart just from this simple action, just from feeling Ichika’s stare.

(I-it’s alright, it’s alright…he has seen me in my underwear several times already…) But this is the first time I’m stripping for him.

Upon thinking this, my hands become hesitant.

"I-I'll do my best…! I have to do this every night when we become husband and wife!"

…Eh?

"Charlotte, every night…I can?"

"I-I said it out?"

"Yeah."

"Uuu!!"

Boof…there seems to be some sound, and my face's immediately beet red.

(Th-that's right! What am I saying! At least I can rest for Sunday and recharge—no!)

I shake my head like a dog drying itself, but these pink thoughts still linger in my mind.

"Charlotte, your hands are stopping."

"U-un…"

In this case, I might as well clear my mind and let it be free from all random thoughts. I calm myself down and undo the buttons easily.

“Don’t be so hasty.”

“I-I’ll be embarrassed if I do it slowly…”

Ichika continues to smile as he looks at my face.

Ahh, seriously, seriously there!

I harden my heart and remove the one piece-type maid uniform before dropping it onto the floor.

I can’t withstand the embarrassment from having Ichika stare at me nonchalantly, and instinctively use my hands to cover my bra and panties.

“I-Ichika, your eyeballs are falling out there.”

“It can’t be helped. You’re so alluring after all.”

“Ah, seriously…”

I can’t say I hate it when he says that.

Or rather, I feel a sense of pride, instead of embarrassment, rise in me after hearing my most beloved say such things.

“D-do you want to keep watching, Ichika…”

“I do.”

An immediate answer.

But my face is all flustered looking now.

“I-I guess there’s no other choice then…Ichika no ecchi .”

I slowly move my hand away, and show myself in my lingerie of lace and see-through material.

What I have on are just the maid logo, my headdress, garter belts, white knee socks, bra and panties.

(It’s so embarrassing…but I can show it to Ichika…)

Just when I was thinking about this, a suspicious person kicked the door down.

“What in the world are you doing!?”

The person’s voice vanish, and he start hitting Ichika.

As for this person’s getup, to put it—he dressed with a weird mask, a mantle, boots, a watch, just like a ‘ Gentlemen Thief’.

“What are you doing!?”

“I-I should be asking you this!”

“I-Ichika!”

I grab the sword on the wall to help Ichika break me.

“Stay away from Master!”

“Wah!”

BINK! The gentleman thief manages to dodge my unrestrained slash right at the last moment.

“C-calm down, Charl!”

“Don’t call me so casually!”

—Eh?

"Thanks for saving me, Charlotte."

—Huh?

(I, I'm called Charlotte…but…only a certain person will call me Charl.)

"World Purge, forcefully interfered."

—ZUKING!

"Uu!"

A tremenouds pain attacks.

I-I like—

"The one who calls me Charl!"

And the Ichika who's willing to call me this points the sword at the fake Ichika.

Then, the fake Ichika's eyes undergo a biological change in color.

"Eradicating anomaly in World Purge… eradicating anomaly in World Purge … eradicating anomaly in World Purge..."

Byun!

The fake Ichika's head lands on the floor.

And I'm the one who cut it down.

"It's a fake, but seeing my head get cut off like that is a little…"

The real Ichika mutters.

I look at the fake again, and there's no sign of blood oozing out as it slowly dissolves into light and vanishes.

"Let's get out of here, Charl!"

"Eh!"

Ichika suddenly carries me.

I'm covered in the mantle, and I can hear the sound of glass being broken from afar.

(I can feel…Ichika's heartbeat…)

I'm surrounded by a warm presence of love as I leave this fake world.

"Fuu…"

Having returned back to the forest, I first put Charl down.

"Kyaahhh!!"

"What—GUAH!"

"D-Don't look! Ichika no ecchi!"

Charl covers my eyes with her hands; for some reason, she's not wearing the IS Academy uniform, but the sexy lingerie she was wearing in that world just now.

"Wh-wh-why?"

"Cecilia changed into her uniform just now."

"Didn't I tell you not to look!"

I'm poked in my eyes.

"GYAAAHHH!!"

"Ahh!? So-sorry! But, that, you told me to wear this, Ichika, and you told me to take it off…"

"Th-that's why…it's the fake…"

"Are you trying to escape with this excuse?"

What do you mean by escape…that's the truth.

"No, that's why, well, Charl."

Anyway, I let her put on the mantle, and then check her expression as I think of a way to appease her.

"Y-your cute face will be wasted if you get so angry."

"…"

Argh, I failed.

Charl puffs her cheeks and turns her back at me.

"…A date."

“Y-yes?”

I respond to this teeny-weeny voice, and Charl then turns around while covering herself with the mantle.

“I want a date! I’ll forgive you if you promise me that we’ll have a date at a theme park!”

“O-okay. If it’s a theme park, let’s go with everyone—”

“I want to go alone!”

She stares at me without looking away, tears still in her eyes.

(Uu…how can I refuse when you’re giving me such an expression…)

I reluctantly give up on resisting, and nod.

“I’ll promise you…but I’ll need to get a deposit first.”

“Eh, you really agree? Really?”

“Didn’t you ask for it, Charl?”

“Eh? Ah, yes, that’s how it is…”

Charl’s expression’s glowing as she puts her hands on her reddened cheeks.

“…I succeeded. Right, I asked for it, ehehe.”

She seems to be in a better mood, so I can relax for now.

“Let’s leave this world first then. I’ll send you out.”

“There’s no…need”

Kanzashi appears from the forest just like before.

“I’ll…send her out…”

“O-okay.”

Her voice seems to have some fury in it, and I find it a little difficult to argue back.

“Anyway, Charlotte’s…uniform download…complete. ”

Charl’s immediately surrounded by light, and she changes back to her usual IS Academy Uniform outfit.

“I’ll be going out then, Ichika. Don’t forget the promise .”

Charl’s being abnormally energetic, and she walks to the outside of the forest with light steps.

Kanzashi whispers to me something before she heads off after Charl,

“Biased...”

“Wh-what!? No, that’s not it. I’m not—”

But Kanzashi has already looked away.

“…”

I’m left alone, and scratch my head while not knowing what’s going on.

“It’s great that you can see her smiling face again.”

…Am I hallucinating? I think I hear something, and yet it doesn’t feel that way.

Anyway,

“Two more doors. Laura and Houki, huh?”

A thought pops up in my mind, telling me there are two more troublesome—no, two people in huge trouble.

“Anyway, I can only go on!”

I motivate myself and rummage through the clothes case.

My name’s Laura Bodewig.

The commander of the German Special Forces ‘Black Hares’, and currently—

“World Purge, complete.”

—And now, I’m a groom loving my ‘wife’ who I married two months ago.

I used the salary given by the army to buy a house as our love nest. It does feel a little too large for 2 people, but considering the future, this isn’t inappropriate

“Hm…”

I lay the newspaper out on the living room table, waiting for breakfast.

“The situation in the Middle East is changing. Will it affect my Germany—”

“Laura, didn’t I tell you not to read the newspaper when you’re eating?”

“Y-yes. Sorry.”

My wife said this as he serves the hot cocoa with lots of milk in it.

(Such a capable ‘bride’)

I’m nodding away in my heart.

On a side note, the wife’s called Orimura Ichika.

“Laura, the omelet rice’s done.”

I receive the omelet rice that’s soft on the inside, filled with love, and look at Ichika again.

He’s dressed in an apron, and is the ‘bride’ I’m proud of.

“Oh yes, Ichika, actually, I…”

Ahem. I cough, and change the topic.

“I have a special vacation today, so, well…”

“We can spend the entire day alone?”

“U-um.”

I’m a little embarrassed, while Ichika’s face immediately lit up.

“In that case, let’s hurry and use these.”

“Th-those are!”

Those are the 5 ‘satisfy any wish coupons’ we obtained from each other on our wedding anniversary.

I look at my familiar handwriting, and a stronger sense of embarrassment rises in him.

(He must be thinking of whatever ‘wish’ he wants, that damned Ichika…)

I cosplayed as a Gothic Lolita the last time.

What does he want me to do this time? A nurse?

“Laura, be my healing angel…”

A-a maid, maybe?

“Call me Master…”

Or maybe a bunny girl?

“You’re a cute bunny-chan, my Laura…”

…

“Laura? Laura?”

“Eh? What is it?”

“You’re nosebleeding.”

Ichika mentions this and wipes my face with his handkerchief.

“I can do it myself! Yes!”

“Yes yes.”

“Just say ‘yes’ once.”

“Let’s not talk about that, Laura. Say ahh.”

…Gulp.

(Waah, Ichika’s omelet rice melts in my mouth~ ♪)

—Eh, now’s not the time to indulge in such happiness!

“Ichika!”

“Yes.”

“Wh-what kind of wish did you make?”

I stand up without further thought, and Ichika smiles as he points out my fault.

“Okay okay, just calm down. Being anxious is a flaw a commander mustn’t have, right?”

“U-um…that’s right.”

I sit down again, take a bite of toast, filled my mouth with salad, and take a gulp of cocoa.

“A naked apron then.”

—Bfftt!!

“Ack, ack ack!...Wh-what!?”

“My wish is for you to try being in a naked apron, Laura. ”

“Y-yo-you idiot! Who’ll do such a thing!?”

I poke my head over the table and close in on Ichika.

Only to be attacked by with a kiss on the forehead.

Chuu.

“Ahh…”

“Please, Laura♪”

"U…um…"

…

……

……..

"I-Is this alright?"

My voice is devoid of force, and I hesitantly walk out of the living room.

I have only an eyepatch and an apron on me, and I'm so embarrassed here.

I pull the cloth in front of me, hoping to cover even a little bit of cloth, but Ichika gives an uncompromising stare at my body lovingly.

"Uu…"

"You're very cute, Laura."

"What, shut up shut up!"

Ichika says with a very gentle voice, seemingly wanting to raise my embarrassment.

“Then, since it’s rare to see you wear an apron, how about you cook?”

“Wh-what!?”

“Your cuteness will increase this way, Laura.”

“Ugh…!”

I can’t resist when Ichika describes me as ‘cute’.

I hate myself for my stupidity and small stature…but I love it.

(I’m…a weak woman.)

Once I recognize this dissatisfaction in my mind, it becomes delight again.

“If you dare do anything funny…I won’t forgive you.”

“What weird thing?”

"Anyway! Those, well…perverted…hump! Don't make me say it!"

Bump! I hit Ichika in the abdomen, and walk to the kitchen.

"It hurts…Laura."

"What is it?"

"Your butt's cute♪"

My bare area was being fondled at.

My mind's boiling, and I swing a punch back hard at Ichika..

But Ichika gently stops my fist, and then hugs me from behind nonchalantly.

"You're so cute, Lura."

"T-this! Stop it, you idiot…ahh!"

He touch the apron covering my breasts.

Once I show a response from the sensitive part, Ichika whispers an intoxicatingly sweet and lewd line at my ears.

"…Let's play on like this today."

"Wh-what?"

"Let's play kissy kissy."

Chuu! A kiss is engraved on my shoulder.

(I-I-I-I—)

My mind's all dizzy now.

Ahh, but, but,

(Maybe it's not so bad…to go with the flow like this…)

Just when I was lost in my thoughts of paradise, a growl suddenly rang.

"Goodness me, why in the world is everyone having such dreams!?"

There’s a suspicious person dressed in full silver armor opening the door and entering.

“Who are you!?”

I grab the chopper from where I am and throw it at the armored man.

DANG! The chopper lands right at the chest with a loud sound…but it’s shallow.

“A-ar-are you trying to kill me!?”

“Of course. Those who get in the way of Ichika and my relationship shall all die!”

I rush out from Ichika’s embrace and charge in low at the armored man.

“Hah!”

“!”

I land a sharp fatal kick at the gap of the armor.

And I felt the opponent’s bones let out a creak.

"Gurk!"

The armored man kneel down on his knees. I forcefully pull out the chopper from his chest, and quickly placed it at his neck.

"It's over. Die."

"Do your best, Laura."

I suddenly hear Ichika cheering me from behind, and my heart flutters.

"O-of course. It's decided—"

"You bastard…making Laura fight in your stead."

The armored man stands up with quite the momentum .

I hurriedly draw back the chopper and slash at the armored man, but the slash feels shallow.

"Move aside, Laura."

"Do your best, Laura."

There are two Ichika voices, coming from both front and back.

(I-I-I…)

The armored man pushes aside me as I'm feeling lost, and draws the sword at his waist.

"GOOOO!"

"Do your best, Laura."

ZAK! Ichika's stabbed through the chest by the chest.

His heart should be pierced through completely, but he's not letting out a single drop of blood.

And also, he's repeating the same line over and over again like a broken recorder.

"Do your best, Laura."

He just continues, and continues.

"Do your best, Laura. Do your best, Laura."

He just keeps on repeating this line over and over again.

"Do your best, Laura. Do your best, Laura."

The 'do your best' soon becomes 'fight'.

(I-I-I'm born, to fight…)

"Wh-what kind of joke is THIIIISSSS!!"

The armored man slams Ichika into the wall, and raised the sword used to stab him.

Even as his brain was split in two, he continues on,

"Do your…best…Lau…ra, fig…ht…on…kill…kill…"

A-ah, ah—

"Uwahh! N-no…. No…no! I'm not a fighting ma…"

"Laura!"

The armored man takes off his armor.

He removes his helmet, and a familiar face appears in front of me—

"It's alright, Laura. You're yourself, and irreplaceable. You don't have to fight against your will."

"Ahh…Ichika…"

I'm surrounded by that warm embrace, and lose my consciousness.

"Alright…"

Once we return to the forest, I let the sleeping Laura in my clutches land on the field so that she can continue sleeping.

I suppose the fact that she’s sleeping soundly is proof that she’s having a good nap, and I can’t find anything wrong with her.

“Just like a sleeping beauty.”

I touch her nose.

“She really looks cute like this.”

I too sit beside Laura at her waist, and look at the sky without minding her at all.

“But why is it that all their dreams includes me?”

“Let me answer this.”

A head popped out from the lush forest, and I didn’t need to think to know it’s Kanzashi.

“Do-don’t scare me like that…”

“Yes…”

She nods and reverts back to her usual passive mode as she walks out from the forest.

“You have a lot of leaves on you…guess there’s no choice.”

I pick the leaves one by one off Kanzashi, and her face is red for some reason.

“Do you know how the enemy’s attacking us?”

“Yes, I guess the enemy’s...connects directly to its attack targets in a neural way…this method turns the attacked’s inner wishes and desires to become reality, blocks off stimulation from the outside way, and cause some sort of psychological effect…the intention is to—”

Upon hearing Kanzashi say this, Laura immediately sat up to cut her off.

“Wh-what are you saying, you?Y-yo-you’re saying this is my wish!? K-kn-kno-know your place!”

Laura’s embarrassed in an interesting manner, and I start to tidy up her silky hair that’s messed by the wind.

“Good morning, sleeping beauty.”

“S-sl-sleep-sleeping beauty!? I-i-Ichika, you…!”

Laura’s about to leap and snare my neck, but Kanzashi puts her hands on Laura’s head to stop her.

“Your face…is really red.”

“WHA!?”

“In other words…”

“We were right…”

“Th-that’s not it! Definitely not! Ab-about getting married happiy! About however a nice family! About having 3 children! I-I have to fulfill my responsibilities as a soldier since I’m often on the battlefield—”

“Laura.”

Stop. I pat her on the head gently.

“How about you go back to rest?”

“Y-yes…”

I stroke Laura’s silky hair, and the feeling on my fingers really soothes me.

Just when I was enjoying myself here, Kanzashi suddenly coughed dryly.

"…Ack…ack!"

I feel that it's a little pitiful, but I draw my hand away from Laura's head.

"…Then, I'll…be going back."

"Oh, be careful."

"I-Ichika, I have something to say to you once you return."

"Hm?"

"An-anyway, forget about everything today! This is an order!"

Yes! I give Laura a salute, and bid farewell to her.

Then, I look at the last door.

I wonder what kind of dream does that swordsman nadeshiko[10] have?

“…Right, better not go then.”

I can feel a strong killing intent.

“I’m joking, just joking. Ahahaha.”

I rummaged through the clothes case, and found a nice set of clothing I can use.

“—Let’s go then.”

I open the last door.

My name’s Shinonono Houki.

I’m Ichika’s childhood friend, and also his senior at the dojo.

Right now, I’m in IS Academy—

“World Purge………………………… complete.”

Right now, I’m living together with Ichika at the Shinonono shrine.

I’m the miko of this shrine, and also teach the kids kendo in the dojo here.

“998…999…1000!”

I finished my strokes, and wipe away the sweat on my forehead.

“You’ve worked hard for morning training, Houki.”

Ichika said this as he appears, and hands me a towel.

He’s dressed in hakama, and this black piece of clothing really suits him.

“Are you starting now?

“No, I finished my strokes one hour ago. I’m going for a run now.”

“Is that so…then, the two of us can go together—”

“Nn?”

“No, it’s nothing! Nothing at all!”

“Is that so? Let’s have breakfast then. It’s your favorite carrot miso soup today.”

“U, um.”

I was led into the main house by Ichika, who’s showing a smiling look on his face.

(It’s weird…)

In this computer world that’s filled with both light and darkness, the ‘enemy’ attacking IS Academy is silently thinking about something.

(The ‘world purge’ effects on Shinonono Houki is a little weak…why is it…?)

But it’s not completely ineffective.

She has finished ‘isolating her from the real world’.

(…)

But it just seems rather out of place.

The girl thought of the uneasy feeling, and reached her destination.

In this world, the dimensions were vague, void of any roads; after walking for a while, she finally saw the core of this world—an ice sculpture of a world.

(This is…what Tabane-sama said…)

She whispered as she looks at that huge ice book.

(The core of Orimura Chifuyu's personal unit, the ' Kurazakura'…"

"Then, let's have a battle. Come."

"Come."

I—Shinonono Houki—and Ichika are dressed in kendo gear, and we stand up nimbly.

Our bamboo swords are pointed at each other, and we wait for each other to take action.

“…”

“…”

A quiet yet tense atmosphere occupies this place.

Basically, in kendo, the one who strikes first is at the disadvantage.

It’s a basic in kendo to wait for the opponent to move.

However, there is a unique trait in kendo, in that the side that takes action first can continue the flow of the battle.

In this silent stareoff, we grasp each other’s breathing, footwork, and rhythm.

These can allow us to determine when the opponent will take action, and retaliating is easier.

However—

(The breathing isn’t erratic at all…you’ve gotten strong , Ichika—in this case!)

I put the bamboo sword at my hands, and bring my body to charge forward.

I then suppress the Ichika’s momentum backwards, take a step back, and dodge the counter.

“Hah!”

In an instant moment, we strike. Ichika and I pass by each other.

“…I lost.”

I declared.

I was hit by Ichika right in the front the moment I was about to beat him.

His reaction was fast and without doubt.

““Thank you very much!””

After greeting each other, we keep the bamboo swords .

Then, we head outside the dojo, sit down in seize positions, and face outside.

“Fuu.”

I lost, but I do feel relieved.

Just when I was looking at Ichika in a satisfied manner, our stares met.

“…”

It has been 3 months since the day when Ichika came to live in the Shinonono Shrine so that he can attend High School.

He quickly got back his sense of kendo that had dulled , and now he’s able to challenge me in a duel.

“Houki, I’ll change my clothes now, and then I’ll sweep the shrine grounds.”

“Ahh, I get it. I’ll take a quick bath to wash off the sweat on my body then.”

For an instant, I had a thought ‘what if he’s going to peep at me’, but as far as I know, Ichika’s not that kind of guy.

He has the outstanding traits of a Japanese man.

(Hm, if-if possible, I can have Ichika enter the Shinonono Shrine as a son-in-law, and then we’ll spend our free lives raising children, and then we can have a steady retirement.)

—Huh?

“Ahem, ahem. I can talk about such things later.”

I just need to have Ichika with me. As long as I can continue to look at Ichika from as close as possible…

“Detecting anomaly in World Purge, foreign object intruded. Beginning elimination.n”

“…Hm?”

After clearing up the kendo gear, I stood up, and saw a man dressed in white hakama at the entrance of the dojo.

I can’t see his face as it’s hidden. However, why is an unrelated person standing there dressed in complete gear ?

“The dojo’s closed for today.”

“Ah—erm…I’m here to challenge the dojo!”

“What?”

“I heard that I…no, Orimura Ichika’s here. Please allow me to challenge him!”

“Oh?”

He certainly have the guts to challenge my Ichika, but …

“There’s no need to compete to see who the winner is. ”

“You’ll know about it once the contest’s over, Houki.”

Hm? Why does he know my name…?

“An-anyway, I hope to have a match against Orimura Ichika!”

“Oh, since you’re so insistent, I’ll call him then.”

I say this with a proud look, and then head into the shrine to call Ichika.

“Ichika…that just now, was dangerous…”

“U…m-my mistake. I didn’t think through it. Sorry.”

Kanzashi reminds me through the communicator.

I nearly revealed my identity due to carelessness, so I apologized earnestly.

“Be careful. I guess, Houki’s Ichika…is the strongest…”

“? Why is that?”

“…You blockhead.”

Gak. She cut the line.

At the same time, the fake Ichika appeared in the dojo.

“Let me say this here. Ichika here is like me as a senior, and has equal ability as I do. He’s not someone who’s going to lose to a person like you planning to take the dojo down.”

(Seriously, you’re really praising me to high heavens…)

“Isn’t it, Ichika?”

Houki gives the fake a smile, and I do feel a little enraged by the expression that fake me’s showing.

“Isn’t that right, Houki?”

(This bastard’s skin’s thicker than a castle wall…)

The fake gives a smiling face in response, and Houki’s stare is fixtated on that smiling face.

(What’s with Houki’s guy? She never showed me such a smile before.)

I just feel annoyed for some reason, and suppress the rage that rises in me as I ready the bamboo sword.

The fake too gets into position as he faces me, and looks rather happy because of Houki's support.

(I better get rid of this guy soon—)

SPAAAKKK!

“Eh…?”

My mind takes a hit that's about to break me as the sound of a bamboo sword hit echoed.

“Match!”

Houki's voice clearly indicates my defeat more than anything else.

(Wh-what kind of joke is this, oi…this guy…he's super strong here!?)

That's not…at Houki's level.

He's clearly stronger than her.

To be honest, that might even be at Chifuyu-nee's level .

He's fast, and there's no unnecessary movement. His muscles are flowing as smoothly as flowing water, and he has the insight to read into his opponent's actions. All of these aspects are clearly top class.

"Nice going, Ichika!"

Houki says this with a smile on her face.

"Of course, Houki."

The fake answers sleazily.

"…"

I feel a sense of unhappy filling my heart for some reason, to a point where I have difficulty breathing.

"Another round!"

I instinctively call out.

"Humph, the outcome will be the same regardless."

She gives me a cold look with these words.

I resist the urge to argue back and raise my bamboo sword again.

“I’ll be your opponent then.”

“You’re kind, Ichika.”

—*Pops veins*

“That’s expected of a man.”

“Fufu.”

—*Pops veins* *Pops veins*

“HURRY UP AND START!”

I roar out, unable to look at this incompatible pair anymore.

As for why I’m this unhappy, even I don’t know.

But I really hate having such a situation continue on.

“Begin!”

Houki’s voice acts as a declaration, and I quickly swing a strike at the opponent’s wrist. The opponent didn’t back off, but pushes me back.

Because of the opposing pressure, I lose my balance, and he hits my face in a fluid action.

“Match!”

Houki clearly declares the outcome with a proud voice .

But I—

“Not, not yet!”

I again stood up and faced the fake.

(What’s with this guy…?)

The challenger has already taken 27 straight losses from Ichika, but has shown no signs of giving up.

However, his breathing is completely erratic, and his concentration has clearly weakened.

(Trying to beat Ichika in this state is…)

Clearly impossble.

…But there seems to be something I'm concerned with .

Right, what?

(That unwillingness to lose, that look of him continued to challenge even after defeat—)

Who exactly is it?

It seems similar to someone else.

Who…who…

"Oh, waah!?"

"—!?"

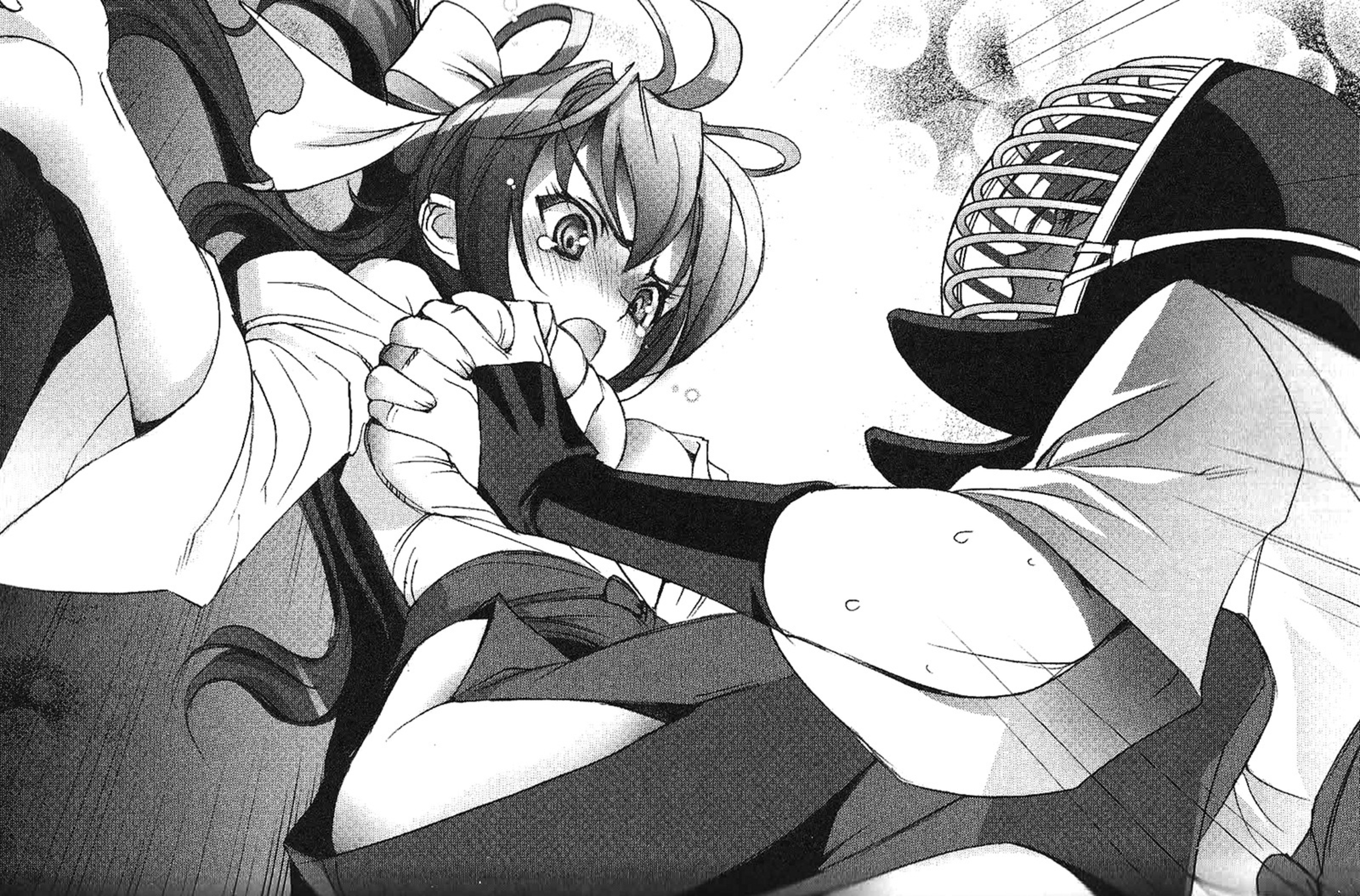
Lost in deep thought, I didn't notice the proceedings of the match.

The man swatted away by Ichika tumbles and charges at me.

—Mnnn.

“Ah……”

I got into defensive position, but that guy’s hands were groping my breasts.



"Ah, no, this, that!"

"Y-yo-you…"

s—

—He has always been like this.

"That's unforgivable, Ichika!"

—Eh?

"Wait, you're…Ichika…? Then, the one there is…"

"Eh!? Ah, that…"

This man's stammering at this point—no, this guy's Ichika! He's undoubtedly Ichika!

"Remove the helm!"

"Wahh, don't do it! I said stop, Houki!"

He called out my name! Of course, this guy's!

"You're Ichika, right!? You're always doing such indecent things—"

"Houki, I'm Ichika."

"Shut up! Disappear!"

The fake Ichika disappears with a forceful call, and the surrounding scenery changes from the dojo to the forest in the computer world.

"E-erm, Houki…are you, hurt anywhere?"

Ichika's standing there while dressed in a butler outfit.

"Wh-what do you mean by I'm alright!? Ichika, you… gr-gro-groped my, breasts…"

I immediately recovered, and was trembling all over in anger.

"Take your punishment!"

I open part of my IS, and summon 'Karaware'.

“WA-WAIT WAIT WAIT! THAT’S MORE DANGEROUS THAN A KATANA—OWAHH!?”

“DON’T YOU RUN AWAY, YOU LECHER!?”

I chase after Ichika, who’s running away for some reason.

—Why is it that I feel happy in times like this?

More than those sweet dreams…

“…Then, we’re fooled by the ability of that ‘World Purge’? And it was just a delaying tactic—it really infuriates me.”

Houki, who returned to the real world, finally accepted what was going on after hearing Kanzashi’s explanation.

“But…why is it that Houki’s about to break free so easily…it’s a mystery.”

Upon hearing Kanzashi say this, Cecilia, Rin, Charlotte and Laura shuddered.

"Because, everyone else—uhm!"

The quartet's hands quickly cover Kanzashi's mouth.

"Re-really, Kanzashi-san!"

"Ye-yeah, because we're…right?"

"Y-yes! That's right!"

"G-goodness!"

Kanzashi looks at the quartet that were anxious out of a sudden in a perplexed manner.

And then, she looks at Ichika, who hasn't returned from the computer world.

(Let's just hope nothing bad happens…)

"Finally made it."

I pass through the forest, and find a pure white beach and an endless azure blue sea.

(Is this the system core?)

I feel that I've seen this somewhere before, but also the feeling that this is the first time I'm here.

It's a sense of nostalgia here, but also a sense of unfamiliarity, something really inexplicable.

"That's…?"

A girl is standing on the beach alone there.

It was a girl with long silver hair.

(Huh? I feel like I met her somewhere before…and yet not…)

Anyway, I approached her first, and felt that I did have an impression on that silver hair.

"Laura…is it?"

I call out to her, and she slowly turns around.

Her eyes are shut.

“Nice to meet you for the first time. My name’s Chloe Chronicle, and I’ll make my departure here.”

After saying that, the the girl’s profile slowly disappears in the shadow.

“O-oi, wait!”

But my call is met only with an empty echo, and the girl leaves just like this.

“What do I do now, this…”

I can’t connect my communicator.”

Unable to do anything, I walk along the beach, and I find a woman standing at the coast.

“Ah…”

That beautiful lady with black hair is my—

“Speaking of which, that Ichika hasn’t woken up yet.”

Rin sighs as she looks down at Ichika, who’s lying on the bed.

“Maybe he got caught in the same trap as us?”

Cecilia said, but Kanzashi stammered,

“I guess not…the system, has already been restored…”

“Then why hasn’t he woken up yet?”

Charlotte says with doubt, and Laura then lets slip a line with a serious look.

“—A kiss then.”

It was a very determined voice.

“HAAAAHHH!?”

Everyone other than Laura exclaimed in shock…and even Kanzashi cried out in a slightly loud manner.

“A kiss!? What exactly are you thinking?”

"Hm? You don't know, foolish people? Hasn't it always been a kiss that makes a sleeping beauty wake up since olden days…that's what my First Officer says."

"Hurry up and fire that First Officer of yours…"

In contrast to Rin's lethargic retort, Cecilia poked her body forward, wanting to try,

"Please hold on! I do think that it's not right to deny this possibility when we haven't tested it!"

"Huh!? Cecilia, what nonsense are you—"

"In that case, I, Cecilia Alcott of the famous nobility with a long history, will be the perfect choice to wake up the prince Ichika-kun."

Cecilia insisted as she panted.

"Eh!? Th-that's too sneaky!! In that case, even I have the right to be chosen, right?"

Charlotte reaches her hand, not wanting to lose.

“Ah-ahem! Well, that’s, just like CPR anyway, just like CPR…”

Houki raises her hand quietly, her stare turning to Ichika from time to time.

“In that case, me too! Hai hai hai!”

Rin too raises her hand angrily.

“Oi, you people! Don’t steal the idea I raised! It’s my idea!”

Laura protests unhappily, and Kanzashi uses this opening to sneak her way towards Ichika.

"…"

""Hold it.""

Kanzashi was grabbed before she could react, on the right arm by Houki, and her left arm by Laura.

"What are you doing?"

"Are you trying to get a headstart?"

"No, I-I definitely don't have that thought it's just that based on the current situation I wonder if I should take a forceful method to break this current deadlock but my views shouldn't be added in and this is something I considered out of morality and responsibility in other words—"

"STOPPPP!!! That's too long! It's long and is a one huge line of arguments! Don't beat around the bush and go around like Cecilia's locks hair. It's annoying!"

"Right right! …Eh, Rin-san? What did you just say?"

Just when the yapping was going on, Charlotte, who was left aside, suddenly had an idea.

“Huh? Isn’t this a good chance now!?”

Pikon! The light bulb on her head lit up.

“DO YOU THINK I’LL LET YOU!!?”

Don’t you dare! Just when Rin exclaimed this and let out a flying kick,

Charlotte duck aside to evade.

And so, the door opened at where the flying kick was directed.

“Oi, brats, what are you fussing over—hoo?”

Pak, Rin’s flying kick landed right at Chifuyu’s abdomen—of course, there’s no damage.

“Rin, I knew you’ll do this one of these days…yes.”

“Ah-ah-ah…”

Everyone look at Rin, who's trembling in fear, and see her off with pale smiling faces.

After that, the girls say,

To protect their privacies, all visuals and voices have been edited.

"At that moment, we really knew that we won't be seeing Rin-san's smiling face again."

"I thought I saw the devil's version of the Hyakuretsuki[11]*"*

"Maybe this is the fate for her. "

"This is deserved punishment for defying the instructor… but it's certainly pitiful."

"She's, a very reliable friend…a warm-hearted mother…an outstanding teacher…and, what else should I carve…on the tombstone?"

—Huang Lingyin's death confirmed.

Chapter 4: The Tea Party at the Secret Garden

"WAAHH!?"

I wipe the dripping sweat off my body and got up.

"I-I dreamt that Rin died…"

Eh, huh? Where is this?

"The infirmary—no, the treatment room, is it?"

This is a place with equipment at the same level as that of an elite hospital, and I guess it's a corner of IS Academy.

(Hm~, I get the feeling that I've been coming here recently.)

I remember I used this bed during the attack on the Academy recently.

"…You woke up?"

Eh, huh? Somebody's on the bed next to me.

"…"

I opened the curtain without hesitation, and saw Tatenashi-san, putting on her shirt without wearing a bra.

K-TATENASHI

Boing, the busts are still as nicely curved as before—

“WAAAAHHH!? I’M SORRY! I’M SORRY!”

I hurriedly pull the curtain back, but it’s too late. The lance of the IS ‘Mysterious Lady’ immediately stabs over.

“I, chi, ka, kun~? This onee-san won’t allow for anything like this, you know…”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry! Tell me to do whatever you want me to do, so please forgive me!”

The lance immediately stops.

“You’ll do anything?”

…Geh, I’m dead.

“Y-yes, anything that can actually happen in reality…”

I affirm tentatively. At this point, the tip of the lance is already pointed 1cm away from my neck.

“Th-then—”

I hear the sound of a gulp…eh?

"P-please…do perverted things to me too…"

…

……

………

"Eh…?"

"I-I heard it from Kanzashi-chan! You did all sorts of lewd things in the computer world at your own whims, right? I don't allow it! The student council doesn't allow it! The student council president doesn't allow it!"

"N-no, erm, that's the trap set by the hacker."

"Yo-you still want to argue? You're trying to argue back? Are you trying to argue back?"

Wh-why is Tatenashi-san being so angry? Speaking of which, I think there's a huge misunderstanding created here…

"Erm, Tatenashi-san, please calm down…"

Or else my neck’s going to be stabbed through by the lance.

“How do you expect me to calm down!?”

It hurts! The lance reaches over and pokes at my skin.

“Uwah! An-anyway, please keep the lance!”

“Ah, sorry…”

Her voice soon calms down, and her lance disappears into light particles.

“…”

“…”

What follows is silence on both sides.

I secretly glance over at the other side through the hole in the curtain, and Tatenashi-san too look over at the same.

““!!””

Both of us then look away at the same time…ugh…what is this.

“Er-erm, Ichika-kun…”

“Wha-what is it?”

“Can I, go over to your side?”

“What?”

What do you mean?

“An-anyway, look over at the other side!”

“Ye-yes!”

I follow what she said, and turn away to lie down with my back facing Tatenashi-san’s bed.

“Erm, Tatenashi-san?”

“Wh-what is it?”

“Why are you on the patient bed?”

“…I’m injured.”

Yeah…wahey, this isn’t what I want to ask!

“No, why must you get onto my bed!?”

“It’s fine as long as our backs are facing each other, right?”

“Eh? Ah, haa, well, yes.”

Ah, I actually gave my consent.

“…Good.”

What’s she trying to do, seriously…

“Th-thanks.”

“Heh?”

“Well…thanks for coming over to help me.”

“Ah, that, well, isn’t that to be expected?”

“I-I was really happy.”

“I-I understand.”

Tatenashi-san's voice suddenly becomes forceful at the end, and I inadvertently straighten myself.

"…"

"…"

Then, there's silence on both sides.

I don't know how long this will continue, and Tatenashi-san's body warmth from behind me cause my heart to flutter.

"Well, Ichika-kun…do you remember that I'm called Tatenashi because that's the name of the Sarashiki family head?"

"Hm, yeah, I do."

I suddenly recalled her doing so.

"I'll tell you now…my real name."

A little breath rings at my ear gently.

I feel that warmth that causes my heart to race, and Tatenashi-san whispers to me with a soft yet clear voice.

"Sarashiki—Katana."

After saying this, Tatenashi-san quickly returns to her bed.

(Her real name, huh…?)

I can't understand the reason why Tatenashi-san wants to tell me this, but once I feel that I can understand her slightly, my heart feels a little happy.

"…"

At a café located at a coastal park not too far away from IS Academy, a girl was sitting alone at a table.

The girl's name was Chloe, the pilot of the IS ' Kurokagi'[12], someone who swore loyalty to Tabane.

(Mission complete…got to leave this place.)

She put down the coffee she did not even take a sip from, and had already cooled; just when she was about to turn away and leave.

“Let me have a seat too.”

Guh! The girl, who had a creed to remain calm, was shocked inside.

Even with her eyes close, she could tell whose voice it was from her internal data.

“Orimura…Chifuyu…”

“Well, take a seat. This is your coffee. Are you fine with black coffee?”

“…”

I can’t escape.

With this instinctive understanding, Chloe sat on the chair with trepidation.

She received the coffee while enduring her trembling hand.

“Well, let me conclude this—tell Tabane not to do anything unnecessary.”

—No choice but to kill her.

The moment she thought of that.

“—Give it up, don’t think about it. Your fighting ability alone won’t be able to kill me, even if you use an IS.”

“…!”

Chloe opened her tightly closed eyes.

Her eyes were of strange colors; her left eye was black, and her right eye was golden.

“An IS developed together with a biological body? Has that Tabane developed it to this extent?”

Fuu. Chifuyu sighed and put down her coffee cup.

At that moment, Chifuyu was locked in a pure white world where the dimensions were unknown.

“Hm…I see. Interfering with the opponent’s mind in the computer world, and using air in reality to cause illusions? Quite impressive.”

Chifuyu mutters, uses her hand to parry away the knife pointed at her neck, and then uses the momentum to pick up the spoon on the table to stab at the pure white space.

“Wanna have a go?”

It was Chloe’s complete defeat.

Chloe undid her ability without hesitation.

“That’s the correct choice. See you then.”

Chifuyu finished her coffee, and got up from her seat.

“Speaking of which, is it alright for you not to meet your little sister?”

“That’s…not my little sister…she’s an incomplete me …the completed form of *Laura Bodewig*.”

And so, she added on,

“I’m Chloe Chronicle.”

She muttered out the most precious name she got from Tabane.

Upon hearing that, Chifuyu seemed to be somewhat satisfied, “is that so”, and walked out of the shop.

Chloe, who’s left behind, takes a sip of coffee that has no warmth in it left.

“…It’s bitter.”

Then, Chloe too head out of the shop.

…Not realizing that someone was tailing her.

“Then, I guess there are no problems now…”

Squall finishes her make up in the hotel room, and sprays the perfume as a finishing touch.

She’s still dressed in a luxurious and gorgeous dress that was worth several hundred thousand yen, and had a necklace with all sorts of diamonds and precious stones of all sizes, earrings, rings, bracelets, impeccable all over.

“…”

The one beside her with nothing to do was M.

She’s fooling around with the locket hanging in front of her chest, looking into space.

“What is it, M? Are you still unhappy about having to go eat together?”

“…I have no reason to go.”

"You have. Don't I need a bodyguard?"

"Don't kid around."

M—Orimura Madoka, who knew about Squall and the other IS capabilities very well, can only feel sarcasm in these words.

"Then, let's move out."

"Fuun…"

"Smile a little. We're meeting that Shinonono Tabane today."

"…"

In the end, Madoka could only follow Squall out of reluctance, or unwilling obedience.

"Un, un, this meat's delicious. Ah, wine please~"

The one indulging in her food without restraint was the rare genius in the world, the amazing scientist who created the IS, Shinonono Tabane.

As for how they managed to invite this Tabane, who’s being searched for all over the world, to this underground restaurant—only Squall knew.

“Are you satisfied? Professor Tabane?”

“Hm? Well, everything’s fine except for the sleeping drug in the soup~”

Even as her plan was revealed, Squall showed no change in expression.

What was more surprising however was that Tabane finished off the bowl of soup with sleeping drug in it, but showed no signs of being affected.

(Well, this is to be expected. It’s ‘that’ Shinonono Tabane after all)

Squall had her elbows on the table, giving a smiling look on her face.

“Then, Professor Tabane, can you please consider about what we discussed?”

“What is it?”

“About creating new IS for us ‘Phantom task’. With the cores, of course.”

“Ahaha, nope~. That’s very troublesome.”

Tabane had no intention of hinting that she could still create new IS cores.

“Please help no matter want.”

“I refuse—ah—I want cake, hamburger, curry and Chinese cold dishes.”

Tabane continued to munch on the pork ribs and stared at the menu indecently as she continued to place orders.

“Fuu…you won’t agree no matter how we ask?”

“Un.”

“Then, how about this?”

Squall clicked her finger.

Chloe, who was restrained, appeared just like a movie scene, with Autumn pointing a knife at her neck.

“If that’s the case, how about some steak from this little fawn?”

“…go.”

“Yes.”

“Let go.”

Tabane smiles, and at the next moment, she throws all the knives and forks at Squall.

“!?”

Tabane then stepped on Squall, who immediately defended herself, leapt, stepped off the ceiling, and charged right into Autumn’s clutches.

She snapped Autumn’s hand as the latter was about to hurriedly swing the blade down, and immediately stabbed the knife into Autumn’s right lung directly.

"Wha—"

Then, she sent palm strikes at the left shoulder, left torso, and left flank, breaking Chloe away from Autumn.

Autumn was sent flying back with a kick, and slammed into the wine cellar with a loud crash.

"Kuu-chan, are you alright nya—?"

"Y-yes…Tabane-sama."

Tabane untied Chloe barehandedly, and smiled to the latter gently.

"Let me tell you. I'm always called a genius here and there by everyone, but that's not just in terms of thinking and brain ability, you know!"

Ufufu, she embraced Chloe from behind as she explained.

"My physical body is over-speced to the cellular level."

This was Squall's complete miscalculation.

She originally thought that even if the hostage was not of any use, she could use her IS ‘Golden Dawn’ to suppress Tabane in the worst case scenario.

But—this devastation resulted.

If Tabane were to get serious, Squall didn’t know if she could win even if she activated her IS.

No, she wasn’t certain if she had an opportunity to activate her IS.

“Only Chi-chan, I suppose, can fight me on physical terms.”

Tabane continued with her back facing Squall, and the latter gritted her teeth unhappily.

But at this moment, a sudden change happened.

“Don’t move.”

Madoka, who had been on standby outside, probably heard the commotion here, and charged into the restaurant with her IS ‘Silent Zephyrs’ activated.

(—Nice going, M, perfect timing.)

Now the chances are at 50-50—it was naïve of Squall to think so.

“Hmm, that’s an interesting unit you have.”

Tabane instantly closes the distance between them, and actually stands on the rifle barrel nonchalantly.

“!?”

The moment Madoka thought about shaking her off, the rifle was ‘disassembled’ into pieces by Tabane’s 10 fingers.

Then, the armor, helmet and everything else was ‘ disassembled’, vanishing into light particles like Sakura petals fluttering in the air.

After the armor on the head was ‘disassembled’, Tabane stopped her fingers.

“Nn? Nnnn?”

“…”

Tabane continued to stare at Madoka’s face without moving.

Madoka did not dare to move at all.

It felt as if her physical body would be ‘disassembled’ too if she made a single move.

“Aha.”

“…?”

"Ahahaha! What's your name?"

Tabane's troubled by this sudden laugh.

"Aha, ahaha, how about I make guess? Fu, fufu."

Tabane's laughing away with her hands on her belly, ostensibly finding it funny.

"Orimura—Madoka, right?"

""!?""

Squall and Madoka showed shocked expressions at the same time.

"Bingo! Hehe, in that case."

Un~, after making a thinking look, Tabane turned to Squall and said,

"Hey, if it's this kid's personal machine, I can make a new one for you♪"

"Eh—"

Madoka however was the one who let out a shocked voice.

“That’s why, eheheh! Come over to my side, nn. Hey, hey, can I take this kid away?”

“I-I’ll be troubled here…”

Squall could only show a bitter expression.

Besides, Madoka was her only trump card at this point .

If she were to be taken away, there would be huge hurdles in the please.

“Why? You’re so petty. Well, it doesn’t matter. Hey, hey, Madocchi, what kind of personalized machine do you wish for? Long distanced? Close distanced? Special armed? Armor focused? Or mobility focused?”

Tabane showed an urge to create as her eyes were dazzling like a child holding a crayon.

"Well, it's fine to leave this topic aside for now! Right, let's eat together. Kuu-chan and Madocchi, yours won't grow bigger if you don't eat a lot~"

Tabane raised her ample breasts as she laughed away as the only one enjoying herself; everyone else present could only look at her flabbergasted.

"Ah."

It has been a few days since the hacker incident, and I unfortunately end up meeting the 5 people I had been trying my best to avoid recently—Houki, Rin, Cecilia, Charl and Laura.

"…"

Right now, we're in our first year cafeteria.

Looks like I'm ambushed here.

"Ah, ahh~, I left something in my room…"

I then make a U-turn.

“Wait.”

“Please wait.”

“Please hold on.”

“Hold on.”

“You’re not stopping?”

—Ugh, I’m caught.

“What is it?”

“You’ve been avoiding us recently, right?”

Ack.

“That’s right, Ichika-san! That’s rude to ladies, you know.”

No, even though you say so…

“Humph! You must have done something shameful.”

What!

"I say, I'm the one who should be saying this!"

"Huh!?"

"That's not gentlemanly at all, Ichika-san!"

"What are you saying, you?"

"Explain further, Ichika!"

"That's right!"

To the people curling their lips unhappily at me, I clearly say,

"You people! What kind of delusions do you have about me!? I'm embarrassed to see you people!"

"Eh…"

"Erm, that's…"

"A-are you talking about, what happened before…"

"Th-the computer world…"

"We-we've told you to forget about it!"

All of them show awkward expressions.

I then proceed to quip,

“DO YOU THINK I CAN FORGET ABOUT SUCH THINGS!!!!”

I carelessly yell out, but the other students immediately find out.

“Eh—What what? The representative cadets had something with Orimura-kun again?”

“Orimu, you’re doing it again.”

Murmuring occurs, and soon, people start to gather.

And the worst thing is that the 2nd year Mayuzumi-senpai is here for some reason.

Damn it, this is going onto the Academy’s newspaper headlines again.

“Leader, I just heard the terms ‘delusion’ and ‘ embarrassed’!”

“Oh, good good! What other news do you know?”

“Recently, Orimu has been on very good terms with Kanzashi-chan.”

Because of that line from Nohohon-san, swoosh, everyone proceeds to look at Kanzashi.

“…Eh?”

Tok, Kanzashi’s so frightened that she drops the broccoli she’s eating onto the table.

Ohh, it’s a good habit to eat yellow and green vegetables.

“And also, Laura-chan said to forget about something! ”

“Mumumu, there’s no doubt about what’s going on. My pen’s burning, burning!”

Th-this has seriously gotten out of hand.

“I thought Orimura-kun would be the uke; maybe he’s the seme?”

"Kyaah!! The carnivorous Orimura-kun is so moe~"

"I always thought he's the tempting uke!"

"Maybe he's an animal…no, he's a beast!"

That's a forbidden beast mode! Someone shouted.

Seriously, what the…

"OI, what's with this stupid commotion?"

Pita. Time seems to stand still as everyone freezes in place.

Th-this chilling ice-like voice belongs to no one other than Chifuyu-nee.

"Ah, well, Chifuyu-nee, this…"

"Call me Orimura-sensei."

GONK…thank you for your teaching today.

"Hurry up and disperse! Seriously…"

And so, the noisy night ended just like this—or so I thought.

In the middle of the night, on the corridor of the student dormitory…

“Ah.”

“Ahh.”

Two profile met in front of the door with the name Orimura on it.

One was a twin-tailed flat-chested girl with a lively impression.

The other was a model-like girl with curly hair and a regal presence.

“Ceci—”

“Rin-san.”

Both of them nearly let out voices, and hurriedly covered each other’s mouths.

And then, they start whispering softly to each other.

“What are you doing here?

“What about you, Rin-san? Why’re you dressed in such thin clothing…”

“I-isn’t it obvious that I’ll wear something thinner while sleeping? What about you, Cecilia? It’s lewd.”

“Wh-what? This is my usual nightgown when I sleep.”

“Then hurry up and go back to sleep. Why’re you here ?”

“That’s my line, Rin-san. You should hurry back to the room—”

GAK!

““Ah?””

Upon hearing something break, Rin and Cecilia charge in through the room.

“Fu, fufu…I caught IChika.”

“Wa-wait Laura. This isn’t good…”

"“Ahh.”"

"“Ahh.”"

The teams of Cecilia/Rin and Laura/Charlotte stared at each other.

“Charlotte, take Ichika and retreat.”

“Y-yes…wait, huh?”

Charlotte suddenly saw the face of the person Laura rolled up.

“Muum—umm—~”

It’s Yamada-sensei, the vice homeroom teacher, Yamada Maya.

“What’s going on? What are you doing?”

“Yamada-sensei, wh-why…?”

“I’m sleeping in this room tonight on Orimura-sensei’s request!”

“Gek!”

Rin immediately showed clear disdain on her face.

“Th-then, I’ll make my leave…”

Cecilia’s trying to sneak away.

“Let’s go back and sleep for today then.”

Laura’s trying to escape from the window.

“Th-that’s right.”

Charlotte too tried to escape at this moment.

““““So then!””””

BAKK!! Maya used her IS to catch the quartet that were exchanging looks and trying to escape.

“…I have to give you a lecture tonight!”

Wah—wah—gyah—gyah—someone heard this commotion at the corner of the corridor.

“Th-thank goodness I didn’t go…”

Houki said this.

"Yeah…"

And Kanzashi.

After that, the quartet caught by Yamada-sensei had a sleepless night…

Epilogue: The Knight who rests amidst the Forest of Sakuras

"..."

The IS Academy Underground Special Zone--

Chifuyu's there, staring at a 'statue', chained to several cables.

This 'statue' was the final fate of the IS that once brought Chifuyu to the title of the strongest in the world. ..the 'Kurazakura'.

Because of a personal battle with a certain IS, the knight had all its systems frozen while protecting Chifuyu, and showed no signs of awakening.

"I know what's the program that Tabane sent me. Most likely...it's the program to forcefully unfreeze you, ' Kurazakura'."

Chifuyu touched the 'Kurazakura' with her fingers.

It felt a little chilly, like a frosted rock.

But she could feel the 'will' burning deep within it.

"When you wake up, it'll definitely be the decisive battle..."

She mutters, her profile looking so forlorn, yet full of confidence.

"...What do you intend to do with me?"

The one saying this was the 'leader', who was standing at the door.

"Hm, please go back to the American Army then."

"..."

The leader, who had guessed that Chifuyu had some plans, was shocked by this.

"If I leave you tied up here, it'll cause an international problem, even for IS Academy, no?"

That's why you can leave. Chifuyu said.

However, the leader was unable to accept this for some reason, and continued asking while surprised by this herself.

"I have a value as a hostage. If the negotiation conditions call for it--"

"Hm, this certainly is rare."

Upon seeing Chifuyu say this without any sense of pretense, the leader 'fell'.

She felt that her heart, which she should have already abandoned, was shot through.

"...Ah, ahh."

"Hm?"

"Private channel, XXX0891-DA."

For some reason, the leader could not look at Chifuyu directly as she told the latter softly yet clearly.

"You can contact me with this number..."

"Is that so? I'll remember that."

Chifuyu said and patted at the leader's head.

Poof, the leader's face went red, and left the room while ostensibly escaping from this place.

"...Good grief, she didn't even say goodbye, huh?"

Fuu, Chifuyu sighs in a somewhat satisfied manner.

She put her hands on her hips, and then used her hands to stretched her back.

"I still can't lose to you here, Tabane."

Afterwords: Those are Dene-Club, Altai-Flow, Ve-painting [13]

Hello everyone, this is Izuru. How long has it been since the last time I'm able to talk with everyone in Cafe like that? Haha.

If you bite an apple, your teeth will drop out, because it's gorilla glass.

Anyway, this is the 8th volume of IS. Haa--kept you waiting.

After all sorts of hardships, this book finally gets published thanks to Overlap-san picking up this series. Thank goodness.

Also, it’s really an honor to have that CHOCO-san be the illustrator of this series. Yes, I still remember the time when I started buy his ‘Iguna Cross Zero Station’ when I was in my second Year of High School.

After that, the pretty girl leaps up from the computer, fights the demon king in the other world, and repeats her death matches against the space monsters breaking the laws of cause and effect—I managed to obtain illustrations after doing this. This is certainly the coincidence. Right, how wonderful~

I have nothing to say about volume 8 at all! Nothing at all! That's all!

For the 9th volume, I plan to write a slapstick romcom. I want to write something free and easy, something soft. I had enough of battles! It's really tiring. See you then!

Yumizuru Izuru.

Ah, so there's a second page. Erm, erm…

"The mangakas certainly have it tough, to be forced to draw manga in the editorial department."

This is what I thought, and I, who's writing my original script in the editorial branch, appears!

Speaking of which, I finished my script in the editorial branch…and the same thing goes for this…

To put it, I'm really sorry.

I'll try my best to finish the 9th volume script early. (I always say this)

Anyway, this volume's released on April 25th, so we're having a direct faceoff against Dragon Dogma…I'll go play Dogma! Everyone, please read IS and answer the questionnaire! I think there's a popularity contest that has been missing for quite a while.

The first placed character will definitely have something good…definitely…definitely…

I don't think I've written about this before. Ahh, I really look forward to the JoJo fighting game. I'm bad at fighting games, but I'll definitely purchase it. "I stopped the steamroller!" "Yumizuru, you bastard!" (Dies)

Recently, I really like Crowell[14]. My love for her increases when she adds on 4 legs, 2 blade arms, missile rockets and angelic wings (and also two shotguns!)

Can I have an IS author side radio drama—it’s such that CHOCO-san and I have to be the ones answering the senders’ requested scenes. Ah, it’s an entire page now. By Yumizuru Izuru.

Translation Notes and References

1. ↑ **Run! Ichika**: reference to«Run! Melos» Here
2. ↑ **Yatsuhashi**: a Japanese confectionery sold mainly as a souvenir sweet [1]
3. ↑ **Imagawayaki**: a Japanese dessert often found at festivals [2]
4. ↑ **Kompeito**: a Japanese candy [3]
5. ↑ **Yokan**: a thick jellied dessert made of red bean paste, agar, and sugar. [4]
6. ↑ **Warabimochi**: a jelly-like confection made from bracken starch and covered or dipped in kinako (sweet toasted soybean flour). [5]
7. ↑ **Shachihoko**: an animal in Japanese folklore with the head of a tiger and the body of a carp. [6]
8. ↑ I know I don’t do this in my proper projects, but allow me to snark here, Char. Please don’t tell me you’ve been reading SAO…
9. ↑ Just a gentle reminder: A perfectly safe taser was used for this scene. Do not, I repeat, do not try this at home, even if you’re a celebrity. Saving something is highly recommended, even if it’s a game.

10. ↑ Traditionally, well-mannered and refined women are called Yamato Nadeshiko, 大. However, Japan does call its national women football (or soccer) team Nadeshiko Japan, so I guess that's a nickname.
11. ↑ Hokuto no Ken. She's already dead.
12. ↑ 黒, lit. black key
13. ↑ Representing Deneb, Altair, and Vega, the brightest stars in the three constellations, the summer triangle. Author replaced the last katakana with kanji that sounded the same, 部, , respectively
14. ↑ ク. I don't want to bother with research for this character, but I guess it's a game character.